

# Progression through partnerships A diagnostic toolkit

Inspired by an evaluation of Defra's Voluntary and  
Community Sector Infrastructure Investment Programme



Jordan, Newbury and Morley 2005

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# 1. Introduction

*If all difficulties were known at the outset of a long journey, most of us would never start out at all. - William F. Buckley, Jr.*

Over the past few years, government policy, both local and national has dramatically increased the number and scope of partnerships bringing voluntary and statutory sector service providers together to achieve common goals.

More recently the voluntary sector consortium approach has been the delivery mechanism of choice for a number of funding and development programmes, notably Defra's voluntary and community sector (VCS) Infrastructure Investment Programme and the Home Office's ChangeUp investment.

## Four key ingredients

In January 2005, Jennie Jordan, Frances Newbury and Philippa Morley undertook an early evaluation of Defra's programme. One of the key findings of that evaluation was that whilst every partnership is unique, there are four central elements that must be in place for successful delivery of the partnership's goals.

These elements or characteristics are:

- A strong, effective consortium with good internal relationships
- Effective, meaningful engagement with the users of VCS services
- Highly skilled members within the team, bringing a variety of competencies to the partnership. Also an increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of rural issues, and concepts such as rural proofing and equality proofing.
- Strong links between the statutory sector and VCS, enabling voluntary and community sector organisations to operate effectively.

To chart the effectiveness of any given partnership, simple, well known management models can give an assessment not only of where the partnership is now, but how far it has come since its inception and whether it is likely to succeed. More importantly, using these models together can show those supporting the partnership where intervention could help move the partnership forward.

This toolkit provides the means to combine the use of these models to identify the partnership's progress and to support the change management process.

## Using this toolkit

This toolkit highlights development models which will track the journeys which partnerships have to make. It gives real-life examples of how the models can be used and suggests interventions which might be useful at different stages along the way.

The toolkit provides the necessary theory to apply the models to individual partnerships, the resources to carry out self-assessments and guidance for validating the assessments. It will also enable a support organisation to map the progress through the necessary change management cycles.

It includes examples of interventions that may support a partnership. However, these are not exhaustive and careful facilitation will be needed to ensure that partnerships are able to deliver to the best of their ability.



# 1. Introduction - continued

## Familiar techniques

The tools and measures described in this booklet are nothing new and you may well have used them before. The toolkit has not tried to “re-invent the wheel” when so many others have invented it so well previously. These models are included because they proved the most effective way to explore partnerships in different ways and to look beyond the obvious at what is really happening within a group.

## Time for it to work

There is general recognition that implementation of any one change management cycle takes at least 18 months. This tends to be longer if change is driven from the grass-roots as opposed to top-down development.<sup>1</sup> To reach the point of successful operation in all areas might require a partnership to progress the whole way through all four change/development models.

Thus, whilst many projects or pieces of work might be undertaken during a programme being delivered through partnership, not all groups will fully evolve or be able to develop their operating environments to the extent which a funder might hope within the given timescale. Nor will all partnerships or consortia be able to demonstrate successful delivery of a programme’s aims, for example tackling social exclusion, by the end of the programme.

## Indicators of success

If the change process within and between sectors is seen as a journey, it will be important for those implementing a partnership programme to be able to measure distanced travelled to identify success. Given the mountains which many partnerships and consortia will have to climb to reach their ideal operating environment, a significant number might

fail to reach this destination before the end of the programme. However, this should not be seen as failure if investment has enabled these groups to move much nearer to their goals. Especially if the legacy of improved relationships means that continued development is likely.

By tracking partnerships through the various developmental processes required, both investors and participants should have the ability to measure progress towards achieving their goals. Use of change management and developmental models could also highlight the points at which groups are likely to need particular interventions.

*Stop worrying about the potholes in the road and celebrate the **journey!***

**- Fitzhugh Mllan**



<sup>1</sup> Safari institute of Organisational Rethinking, Introduction to Change Manangement, Perspectives, Models, Strategies published on the internet: <http://safari-institute.de>



## 2. Tools to track development

Each of the four key elements of a partnership has its own recognised model to track its development, as outlined in this chapter. In isolation these can be very revealing about a consortium. However, by measuring symptoms of each characteristic along a scale, clear links between the status of the four elements can be made and the model unfolds.

This model uses a simple linear method of identifying which symptoms each characteristic is displaying, just like measuring the distance travelled on a journey.

The next chapter will demonstrate how plotting the four models together will reveal the full picture of the partnership's progress. First, we will look at the methods for assessing each key characteristic.

### 2.1. A strong, effective consortium with good internal relationships

*Coming together is a beginning.  
Keeping together is progress.  
Working together is success. - Henry Ford*

All teams need to go through a development process before they can function effectively. This is well illustrated by Tuckman's Team Development Model<sup>2</sup>:

#### 1. Forming

(early stages of team development, reliant on one leader)

#### 2. Storming

(members vying for position, decision-making hampered)

#### 3. Norming

(developed roles, consensus reached, easily facilitated)

#### 4. Performing

(shared vision, easy resolution of conflict, high autonomy)

This model charts the stages of development of a team, from its early stages to its performance at optimum output. The following are typical, but not exhaustive, attributes of the four stages of developing a partnership.

#### Forming - stage 1

- High dependence on one leader for guidance and direction.
- Little consideration or agreement of the team's aims, only the views of the leader.
- Individual roles and responsibilities are unclear.
- Team leader must answer questions about the team's purpose objectives and external relationships.
- Processes are often ignored.
- Members test tolerance of both the system and the leader.
- The leader directs activity.

#### Storming - stage 2

- Decisions don't come easily within the group.
- Team members vie for position to establish themselves in relation to other team members and the leader.
- Leader challenged by team members.
- Clarity of the team's purpose increases but uncertainties persist.
- Cliques and factions form and there may be power struggles.
- The team needs to be focused on its goals to avoid becoming distracted by relationships and emotional issues.
- Compromises may be required to enable progress.
- The leader coaches team members, selling the concept of the team.

<sup>2</sup> B.W. Tuckman, "Developmental Sequence in Small Groups, Psychological Bulletin, 1965, Vol. 63, No. 6, 384-399.

## 2. Tools to track development - continued

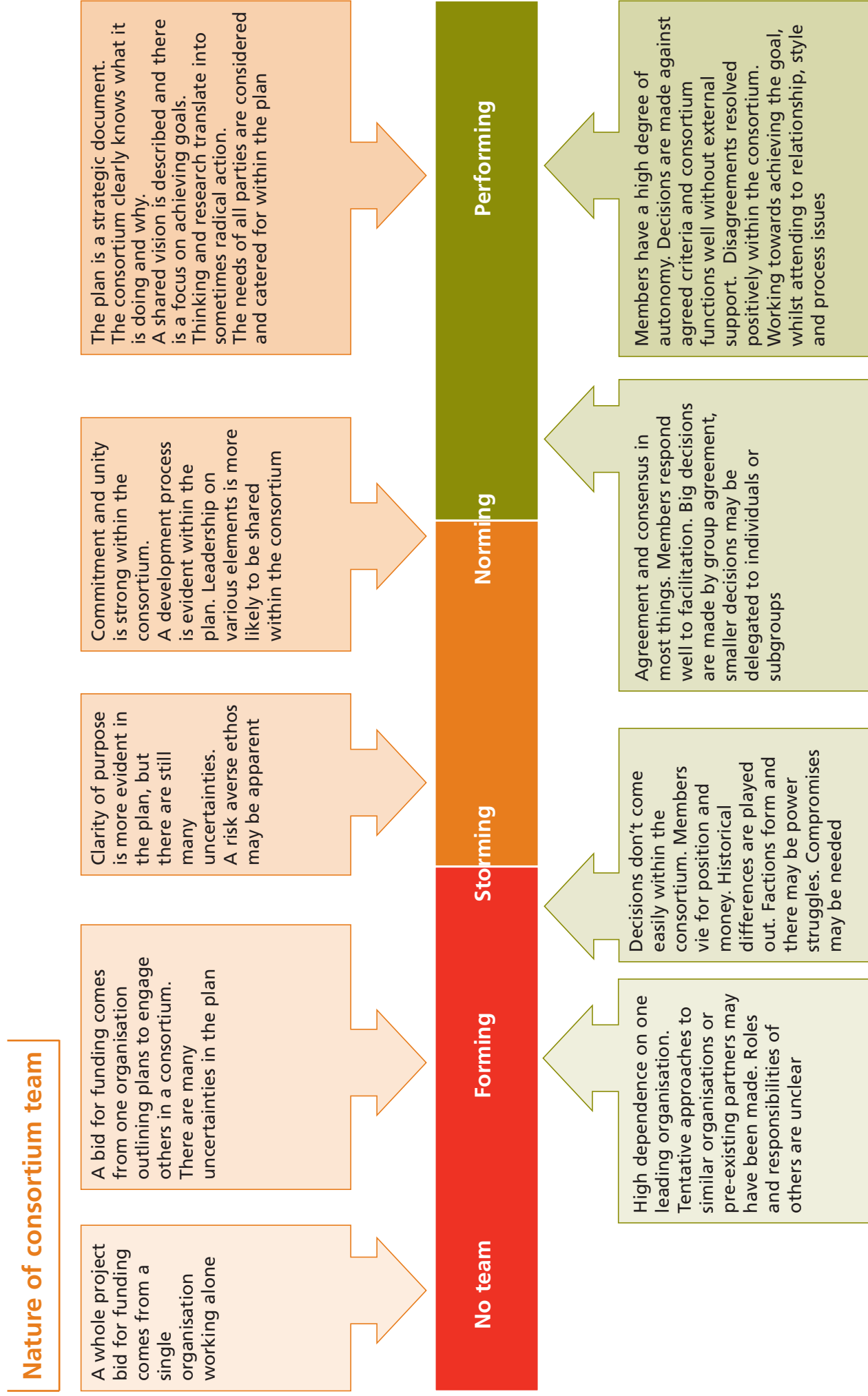
### Norming - stage 3

- Agreement and consensus largely formed amongst the team.
- Team responds well to facilitation by the leader.
- Roles and responsibilities are clear and accepted.
- Big decisions are made by group agreement and smaller decisions may be delegated to individuals or small teams within group.
- Commitment to the team and unity is strong.
- The team engages in fun and social activities.
- The team discusses and develops its processes and working styles.
- General respect for the leader and some of the leadership is more shared by the team.
- The leader facilitates and enables decision making and activity.

### Performing - stage 4

- Team now more strategically aware; knowing clearly why it is doing what it is doing.
- Shared vision with no interference or participation from the leader.
- Focus on over-achieving goals.
- Team makes most of the decisions against criteria agreed with the leader.
- The team has a high degree of autonomy.
- Disagreements do occur but are resolved within the team positively.
- Necessary changes to processes and structure are made by the team.
- The team works towards achieving its goals, and attends to relationship, style and process issues along the way.
- Team members look after each other.
- The team might still require delegated tasks and projects from the leader, but does not need to be instructed or assisted.
- Team members might ask for assistance from the leader with personal and interpersonal development.
- Leader's role is to delegate and oversee.





**Figure 1:** Symptoms of progression through consortium development



## 2.2. Effective, meaningful engagement with the users of VCS services

*Team player: One who unites others toward a shared destiny through sharing information and ideas, empowering others and developing trust. - Dennis Kinlaw*

The most effective voluntary and community sector organisations are those who see their mission as empowering their users, considering them the most important element of any planning or decision making process.

The International Association for Public Participation's public participation spectrum, although designed for public sector organisations' engagement of the general public is extremely effective for mapping the developing relationship between voluntary organisations and their users.<sup>3</sup>

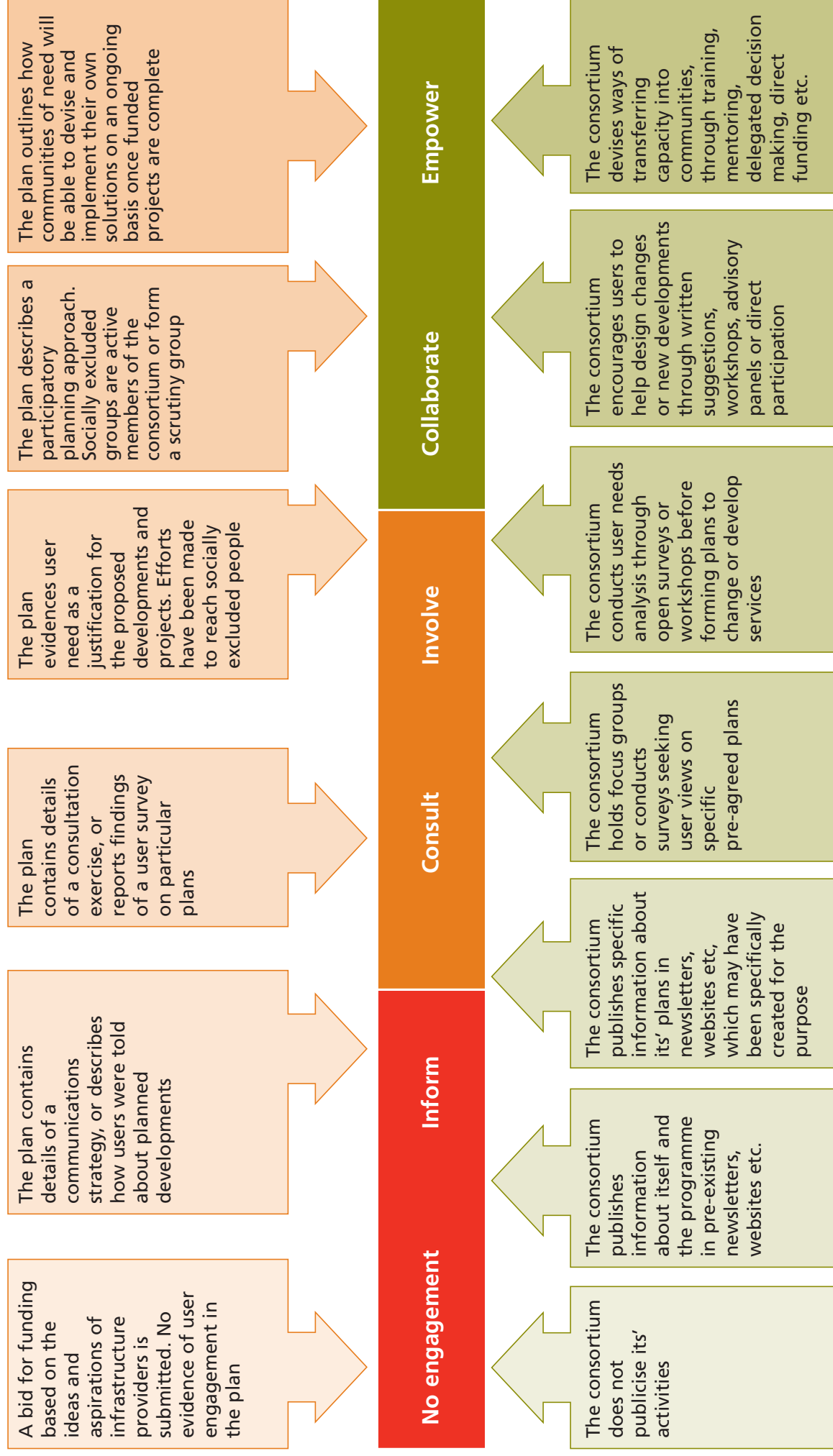
### Increasing level of public impact

Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
<b>Goal:</b> To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives and/or solutions	<b>Goal:</b> To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or solutions	<b>Goal:</b> To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered	<b>Goal:</b> To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution	<b>Goal:</b> To place final decision-making in the hands of the public
<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will work with you to ensure that your issues and concerns are directly reflected in the alternatives developed and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will look to you for direct advice and innovation in formulating solutions and incorporating your advice and recommendations into the decision to the maximum extent possible	<b>Promise to the Public:</b> We will implement what you decide
<b>Example Tools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Open houses</li> </ul>	<b>Example Tools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public comment</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• public hearings</li> </ul>	<b>Example Tools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Deliberative polling</li> </ul>	<b>Example Tools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen advisory committees</li> <li>• Consensus building</li> <li>• Participatory decision-making</li> </ul>	<b>Example Tools:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizen juries</li> <li>• Ballots</li> <li>• Delegated decisions</li> </ul>

**Figure 2 : Public Participation Spectrum**

<sup>3</sup> IAP2 (International Association for Public Participation) 2000. <http://www.iap2.org/practitionertools/spectrum.html>.

## Nature of infrastructure user engagement



**Figure 3:** Symptoms of progression towards empowerment of user groups

## 2.3 Highly skilled members within the team bringing a variety of competencies to the partnership including knowledge of rural issues

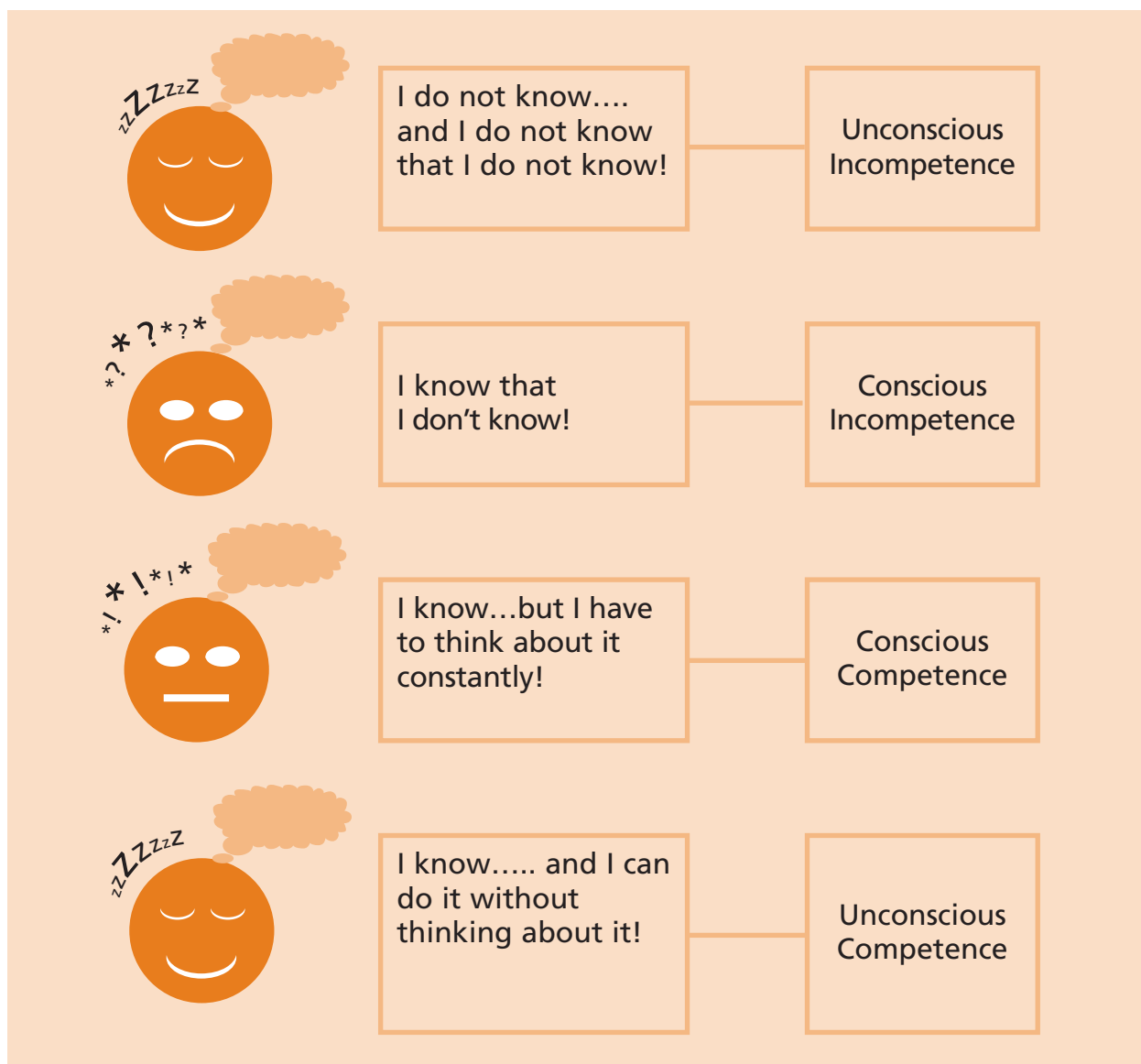
*If you want to succeed you should strike out on new paths rather than travel the worn paths of accepted success.*

**- John D. Rockefeller, Jr.**

Bringing organisations together to form a new partnership means developing new ways of working and requires each organisation to adjust to the new team dynamic. There is a temptation for individuals within the partnership to slip back into their comfort zones and revert to 'the way we've always done things'.

In order to effect change, partnerships need to recognise that existing methods are imperfect and seek new skills and knowledge. It is not until they are able to take their newly acquired knowledge and translate it into action that their aims will be fulfilled. This fits within a cycle of learning that many partnerships need to go through if they are to be successful.<sup>4</sup>

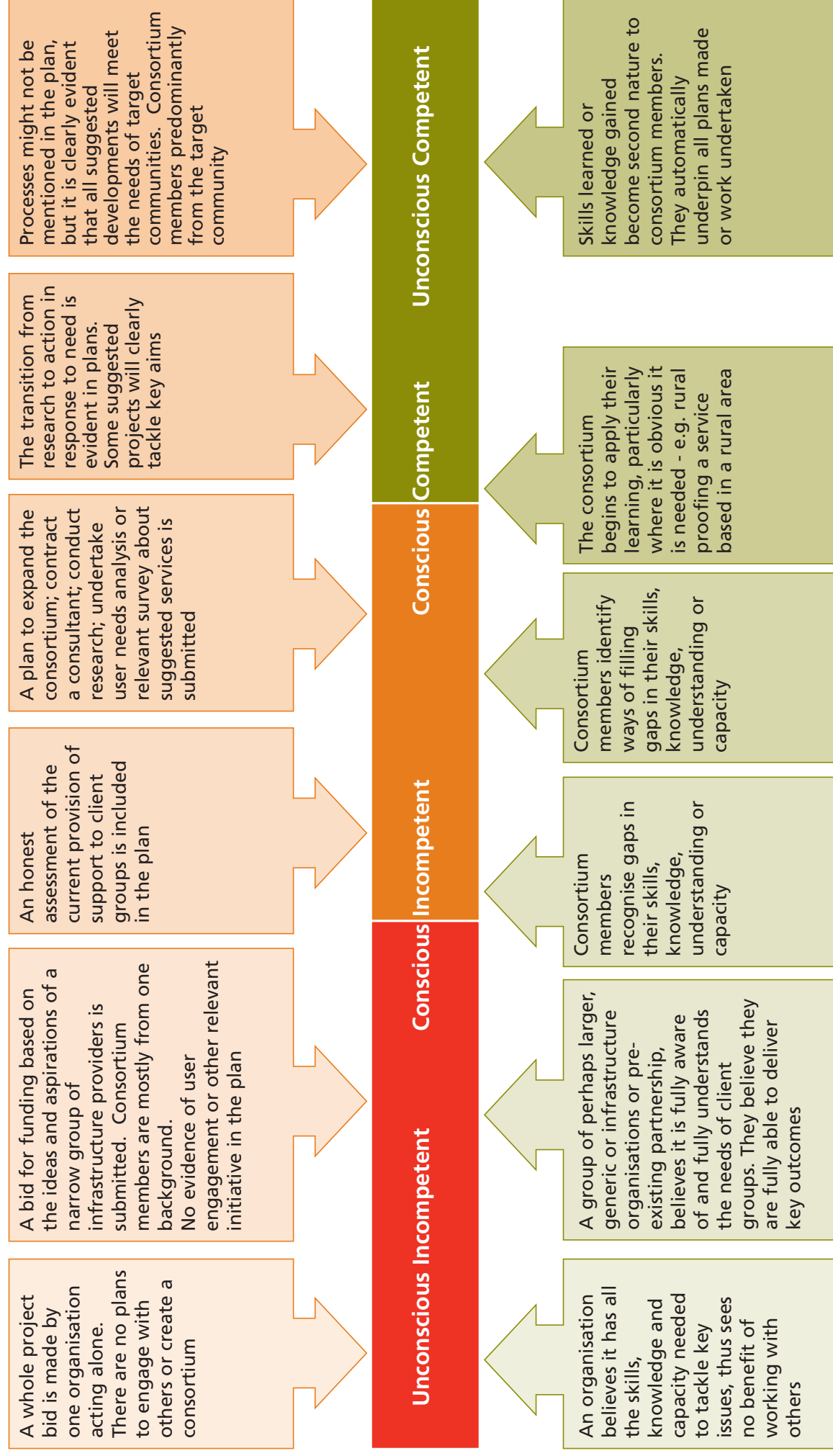
**Figure 4: Conscious Competence Learning Model<sup>5</sup>**



<sup>4</sup> Conscious Competence Learning Model Socrates (?) cited by Fugitt, L <http://isobe.typepad.com/sketchpad/>

<sup>5</sup> ibid

## Nature of consortium competencies (strategic planning, rural proofing etc)



**Figure 5:** Symptoms of the lack of skills and knowledge, particularly rural issues

## 2.4. Strong links between statutory and VCS, enabling voluntary and community sector organisations to operate effectively

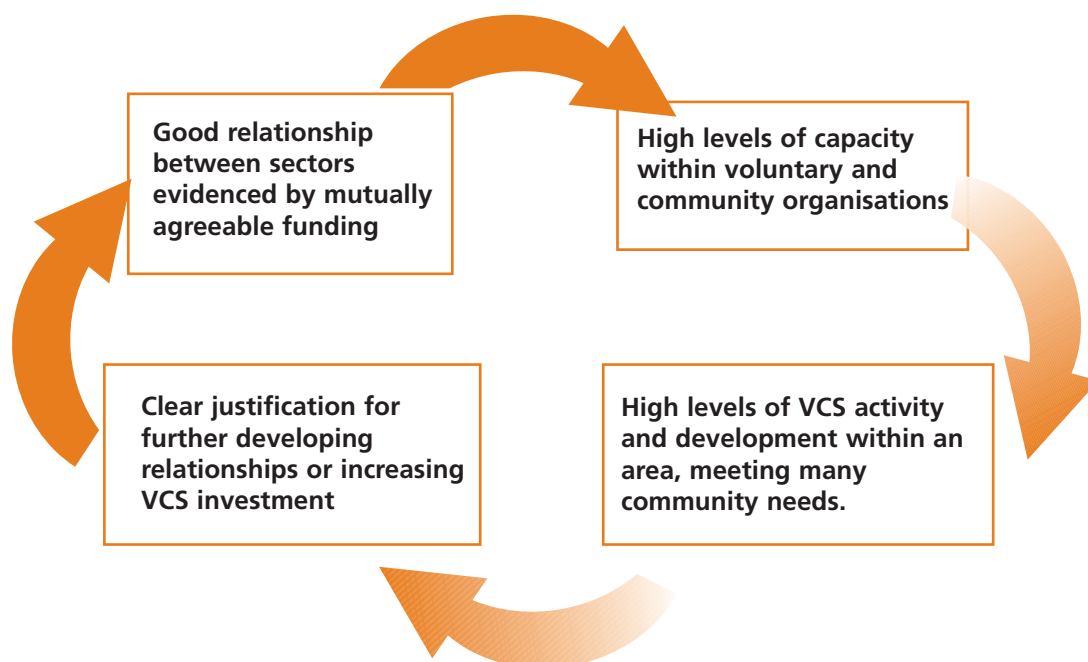
*The man who goes out alone can start today; but he who travels with another must wait till that other is ready.*

**- Henry David Thoreau**

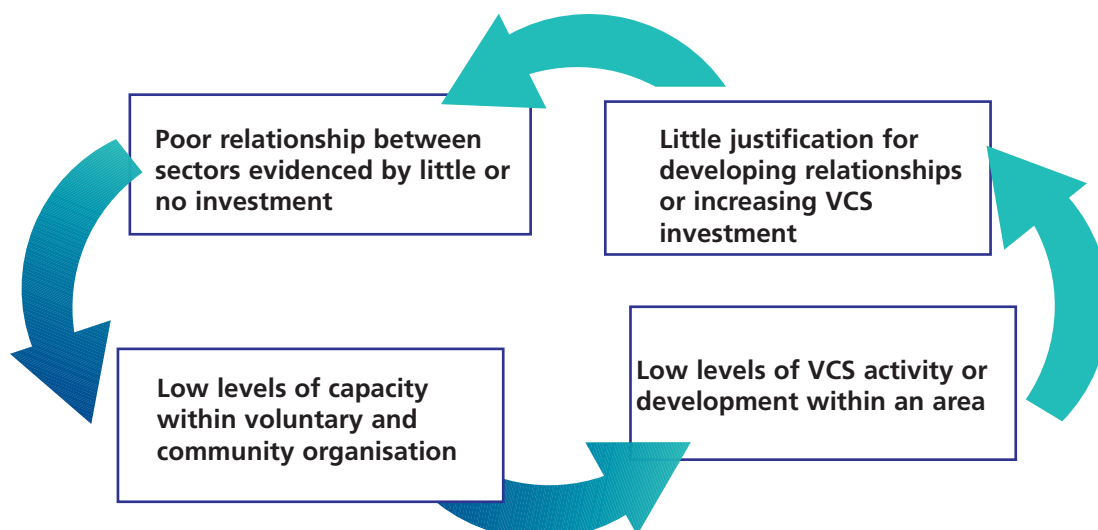
The relationship between the statutory and voluntary sectors is crucial to the effective performance of a partnership between the two and for sustainability of the VCS in the long term. As shown in figures 6 and 7, the relationship manifests itself in virtuous

and vicious circles: strong relationships lead to understanding, delivery and further investment, whereas weaker relationships lead to voluntary and community sector organisations becoming under-resourced, so less able to deliver, leading to the limiting assumption that they do not have much to contribute to service provision. In these cases, local authorities do not understand the role of the sector or how it can meet their own goals and, thus, do not prioritise funding them

**Figure 6: Indicators of a strong relationship with the statutory sector**



**Figure 7: Indicators of a weak relationship with the statutory sector**



The relationship between the two has to be strong if any sustainable partnerships are going to be possible.

## 2.4. Continued.

The development of the relationship between the statutory sectors and VCS is best modelled using Berkes' Levels of Co-Management Model<sup>6</sup> as it is not until both

sectors are an integral part of the other's planning, development and delivery that true and lasting partnerships can be built:

**Figure 8: Berkes' Levels of Co-Management Model**



### Next steps

This chapter has explained how the four key characteristics will be measured. The next chapter shows how to quantify a

partnership's behaviour or symptoms and how this will inform the final assessment.

<sup>6</sup> Berkes, Fikret. 1994. Co-management: Bridging the Two Solitudes. Northern Perspectives 22:2-3. [http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~berkes/berkes\\_1994.pdf](http://home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~berkes/berkes_1994.pdf)



## Nature of links with statutory sector

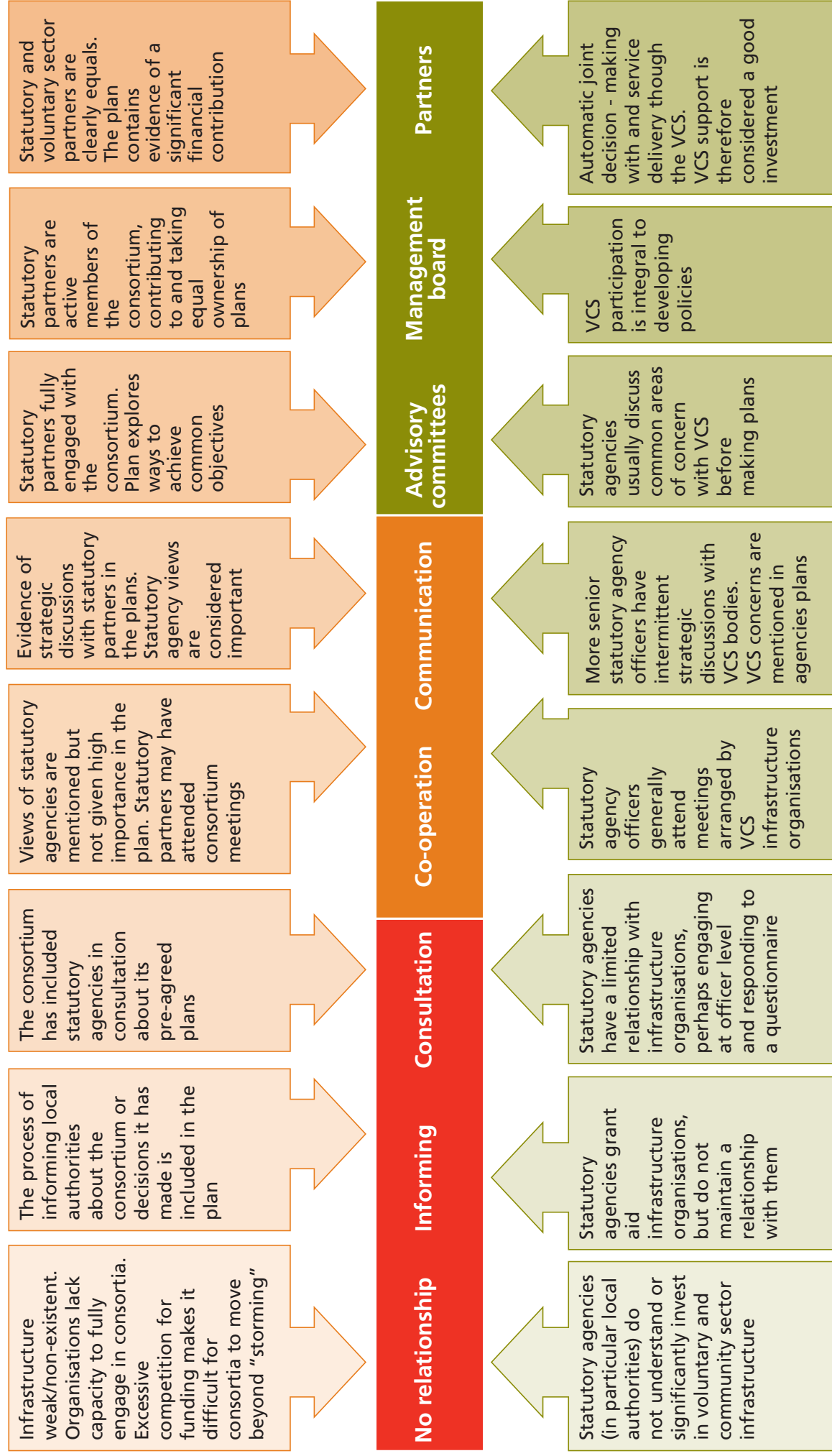


Figure 9: Symptoms of nature of relationship with statutory sector

### 3. Diagnosing behaviour

*As you attempt to make big differences, remember to appreciate the small differences. And remember that you don't always have to reach the goal you set in order to make a difference. - Win Borden*

There are three simple steps to diagnosing a partnership's status and development according to the models we have just presented. These are:

- 1 Identify the symptoms or behaviours of the partnership and note its position along the line.
- 2 Plot their position along the line to work out how far along the journey the partnership has come (and indeed how far it needs to go before it can be successful).
- 3 Join the points on the final diagram to assess the balance between the four key elements.

In order to gauge a partnership's progress and prospects, the journey has been divided into three zones: unlikely to succeed, has the potential to succeed with appropriate intervention and support and likely to succeed. A simple 'traffic light' system is an easy way to express this.

#### The diagnostic process

To plot where a partnership is on any given cycle, it is first necessary to identify the particular indicators which might occur, in either partnership behaviours or work produced.

Once these indicators have been agreed they can be plotted along the model line. It will make it easier for a partnership to self-assess if the terms of the self assessment (e.g. 'conscious incompetence', 'storming' etc.) are removed before the partnership measures itself. Although no judgment is placed on the partnership in this process as it exists to map progress over a sustained period, it may be

challenging for a consortium to consciously label themselves as 'consciously incompetent', especially in a working environment that includes an organisation's principal funders.

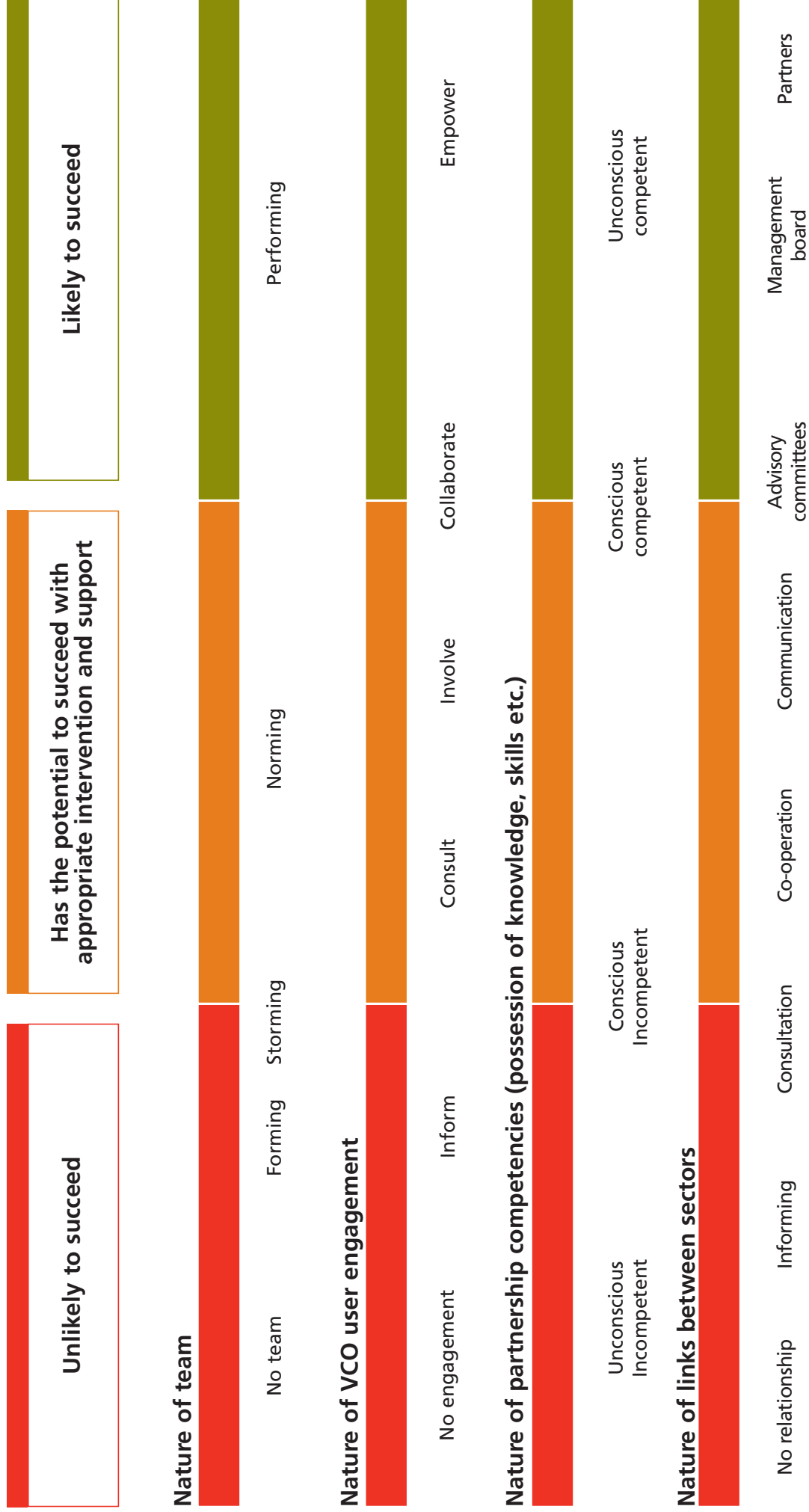
All members and stakeholders of the partnership should then be asked to mark where they feel the partnership is currently sitting along the line of indicators. Ideally these contributions will not be discussed.

All responses should then be collated and individual marks along the line compared. The furthest left and furthest right suggestions should be noted and the midway point between the two calculated. This should be compared with where the majority of individuals felt the partnership is sitting in the development process. If there is a major discrepancy between the mean marker on the line and the majority view, an adjustment should be made.

Once an average position has been decided for all four indicator lines they should be plotted onto the traffic light chart and lines drawn between the four markers (see figure 10). The positions identified on the model show how far a partnership has come and how near it is to being able to succeed. The lines between these points indicate where help might be needed and potential threats to delivery rather than chances of success.



Figure 10



## 4. Measuring your score

The four elements are not stand-alone concepts, but must be seen as part of a whole. Therefore, for a partnership to predict future success, the ideal line should be straight and vertical. This is called a line of consequence. However, when there is a variation in the position of the four markers, and the lines are diagonal or change direction, this is called a line of tension. This is because an extreme position or change in one cycle is likely to lead to a change in another.

### Lines of consequence

These are likely to indicate a correlation between indicators. For example, if a VCO is not engaged with its users, it is significantly less likely to realise that it is not meeting their needs; or if there is a strong relationship between the sectors it is likely that statutory investment in the VCS is good and, therefore, organisations have the capacity to commit time and energy to participating in the team, thus the team is more likely to perform.

If your chart shows that the partnership is at a similar point along each of the development lines, members can discuss which aspect of development is likely to be the greatest enabler, and thus decide upon strategies to move the partnership forward.

### Lines of tension

These can have the effect of forcing a partnership to address the area which is further towards the red zone, as it will be hindering the partnership's progress. For example, an increased investment in the VCS by statutory partners might well lead to an increase in capacity within the sector and thus move both the nature of the team and the engagement with users indicators along too.

However, lines of tension are not always positive influencers. For example, if the relationship between the sectors indicator is

scoring quite highly because the statutory sector is seeking to build the partnership, but the nature of the VCS team is disparate and destructive thus scoring lower down the scale, there is the danger that statutory sector partners will lose patience and abandon the partnership approach, thus pulling the relationship between sectors score back down. The further apart the marker points at each end of a line of tension are, the more likely they are to result in a sudden, potentially negative shift.

### Crisis points

Unless all the indicators for a partnership are falling within the green zone of a traffic light table, there will always be a need for support (and even then there is not room for complacency as this is a long-term process). However the points at which partnerships pass from one coloured zone to another are the points at which they need most support. For example, the storming part of the team's development or the point at which a partnership reaches conscious incompetence and realises that it does not have all the answers.



## 4. Measuring your score - continued

### Cautions

Although this model sets out neat lines of progression in a traffic light system, it is important to understand that both change and these development cycles are cyclical not linear processes.

For example, a partnership which feels it has achieved what it set out to do may ultimately disband, breaking relationships within and between sectors; an unconsciously competent partnership can easily become complacent, failing to notice changes in need or policy which are happening around them, thus they soon return to unconscious incompetence; whilst a user group might become so empowered that it no longer feels the need to rely on a service provider, thus the link between the two is lost.

Equally a partnership can become stuck in a particular part of the cycle, returning to the same point over and over again. The solution here is awareness of the cycle itself. It is only when a group recognises that it is in a process such as this that it can understand the need to find strategies to move forward. Otherwise there is the danger of simply accepting the status quo. External facilitation and challenge is very useful in these circumstances.

### Identifying success

For this model to be of use it is important to revisit the diagnostic tool on a relatively regular basis. It is only by demonstrating the movement of a partnership up or down the developmental scales that progress (or the lack of it) can actually be measured.



## 5. Case Studies – How the tools have helped in real life

### Case Study A

*"These problems have been going on for years - we want to invest in change – but where would our money really make most difference?"*

#### Team

- Permanently storming.
- Trying to draw others, e.g. stakeholders, into its disagreements.
- Long standing issues affecting programme, resulting in above behaviours.
- Grudging acceptance that the team approach is necessary but much angst between members.
- Lots of money and effort has been invested in mediation over the years but to no avail.

#### User engagement

- Not great, but a significant amount of early investment money was spent on consulting with user organisations by both generalist and specialist organizations.
- Report from consultation largely ignored by those who commissioned it.
- Other pieces of research have had a similar fate in the area.

#### Competencies

- All the evidence points to the competencies of the team being very low.
- Submitted projects show little evidence of any long term planning or ability to construct or convey an effective business plan.
- Sustainability plans amount to "demand 5 year grants instead of 3 year grants".
- No strategic links between projects suggested for funding.

- Generalist organisations actively block competent specialist providers developing their roles because they genuinely believe that they are fully able to meet all the needs of the whole VCS, despite user research showing that this is not the case.
- Little knowledge or understanding of rural issues.

#### Relationships with statutory sector

- local funders committed to VCS infrastructure.
- Increased investment pledged.
- VCS seen as fundamental to service improvement.
- Funders concerned about the difficulties within the VCS but have run out of strategies to address them.

#### What did the model show?

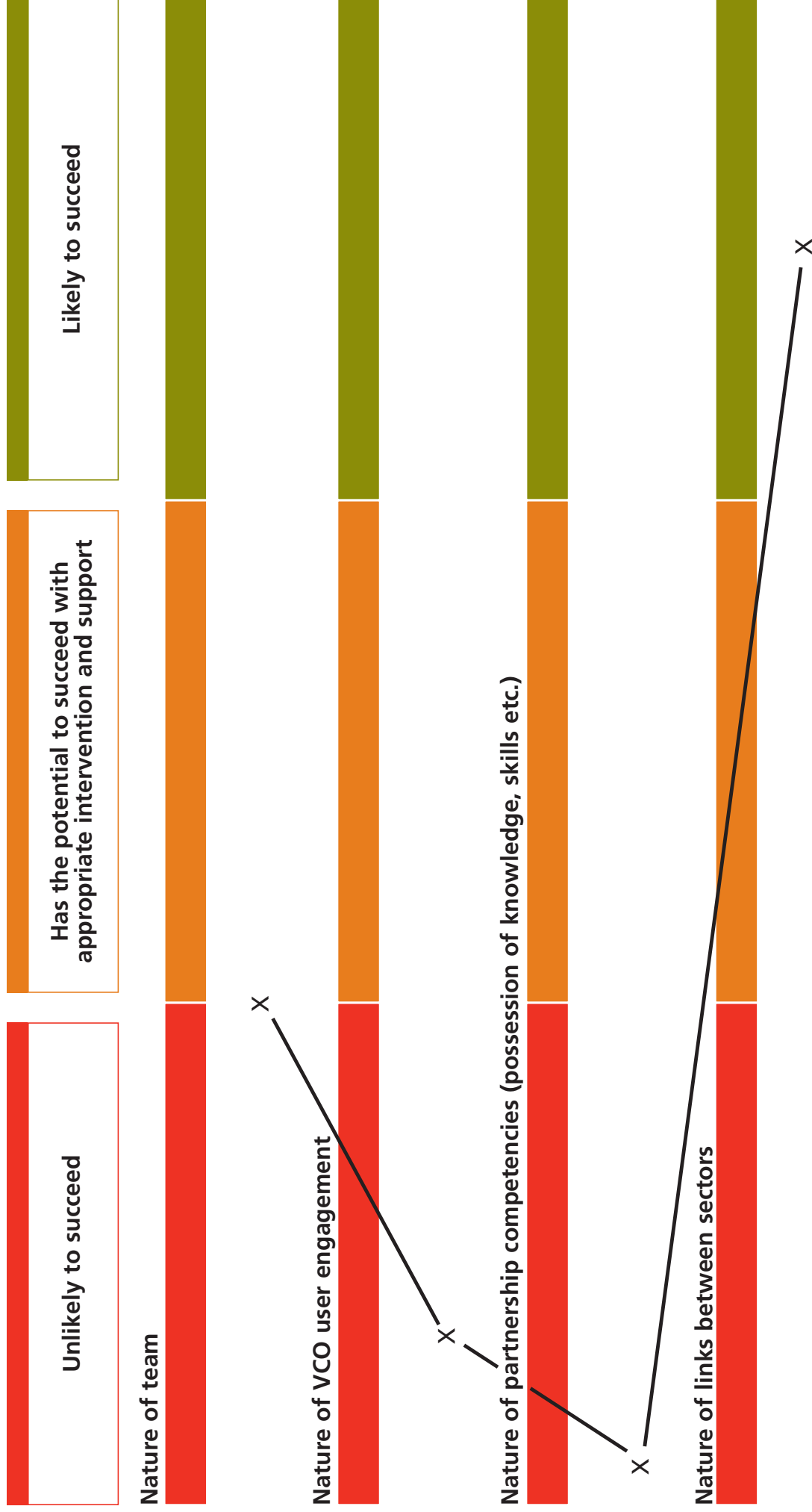
Having plotted the chart, it became apparent that the main issue is the skills and competencies within the consortium. These are holding the development of the team back, because the group members do not have the skills necessary to work together to create a vision to share, so they focus on their differences. Remaining in unconscious incompetence is preventing the team from moving away from storming, from acting on user research and threatening their relationships with the statutory sector.

#### Solutions

Prior to use of this model the assumption was that money would be best spent on mediation within the sector, as the "Storming" is by far the loudest problem. However use of the model demonstrates that the permanent storm is actually a symptom of another problem. Investment in developing the skills and competencies of consortium members is more likely to move the consortium in to "norming" and thus a step nearer to performing.



Figure 11



## Case Study B

*"We thought we were doing the right things – but seem to have got stuck in research, and aren't really translating it into action. What is our problem?"*

### Team

- Extremely positive start.
- Good skill mix with strong steering group.
- Sub-groups taking responsibility for themed research during early investment programme.
- Steering group continuing to meet since the end of the early investment stage.
- Despite this positive start, a dramatic slowing of the process with little or no fresh impetus or change being affected.

### User engagement

- Events organised by steering group well attended, commissioning high quality research.
- Evidence of broad engagement from users and stakeholders from a variety of backgrounds.
- Complaints from some that they feel it is hard to get involved.

### Competencies

- Some high levels of competency from people involved in the consortium.
- Strong vision of what needs to be achieved from the steering group.
- Little progress beyond mapping – knowing that change is needed, but attempting to resolve by more research.
- As a result, no action being taken towards implementing change and achieving the programme's aims.
- Progress limited to areas tackled by group work during the early investment.

### Relationships with statutory sector

- Statutory sector partners on board with what the consortium is trying to achieve.
- Regular meetings at senior level.
- Automatic assumption that VCS input is important early in planning processes.
- Genuine will to explore how the sectors can work together even better in future.

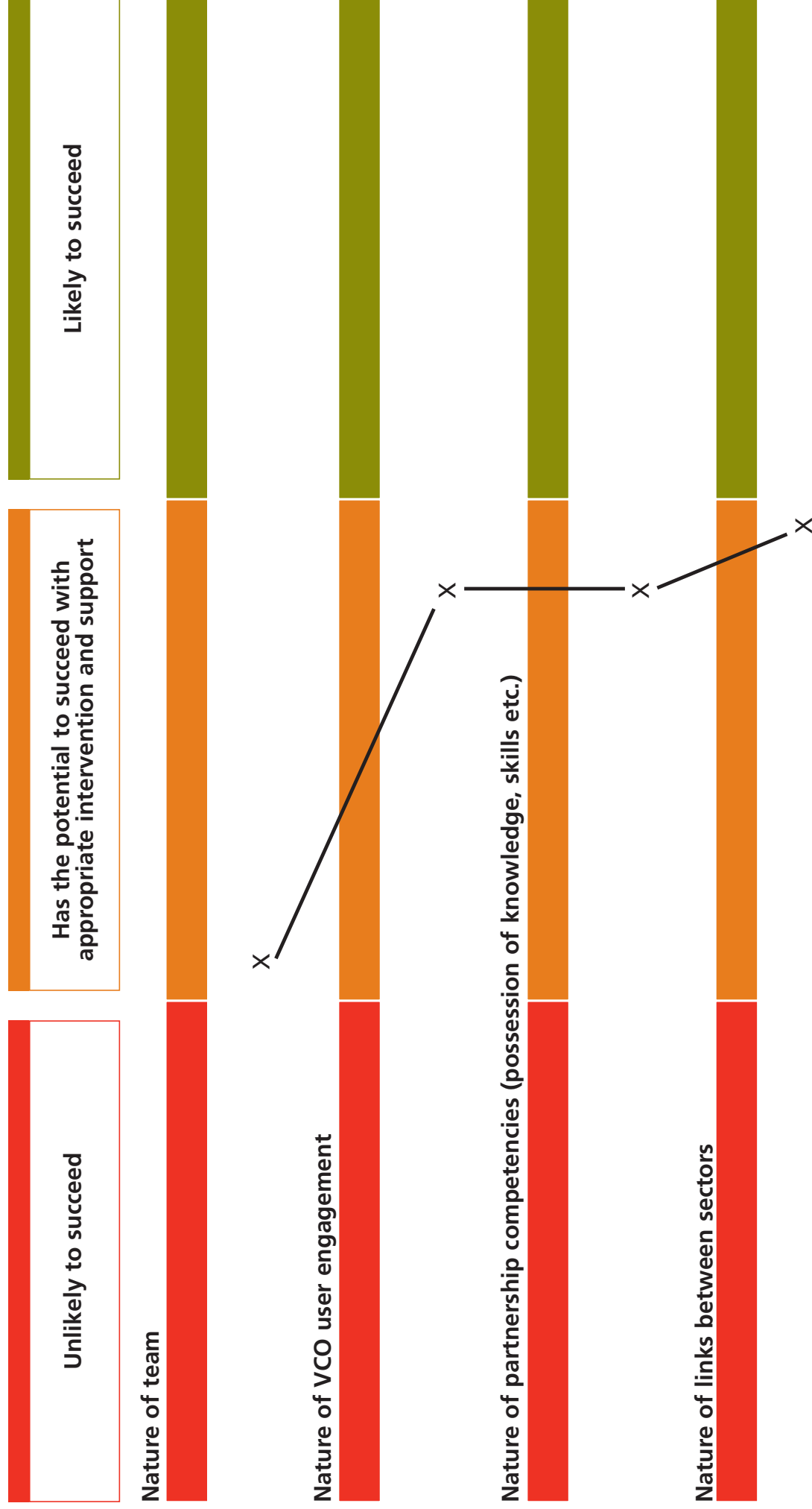
### What did the model show?

The model revealed that the team was the problem, despite previous assumptions that the team approach was the consortium's strength. Fewer people were actively involved than before, with the people who most need to act no longer participating. The group cannot address the key issues because they are owned by the absent partners, so can only commission research. Although the steering group has overcome issues including trust, their close bond has excluded other potential partners. The need to have the right people involved is evidenced by the progress made in the early phase, when task groups all had appropriate membership and ownership, so were able to act. Areas without sub-groups do not have this representation and ownership, so members cannot implement change on their behalf.

### Solutions

The consortium questioned why people are no longer engaging. It seemed that the organisations which most needed to improve were those which have the least capacity to engage. A number of solutions are now being explored including the potential for funding organisations to participate and using peer mentoring so that support and engagement can be taken out to organisations rather than relying on them being able to attend meetings. The role of the steering group also needs to change. Instead of them leading the process and being vocal about their vision, they need to take a step back and become more outward focused enabling those on the peripheries of the programme to express their own visions of the future. The group's role should now be more that of co-ordination, with further subgroups of organisations being given support and empowered to scope their own futures and develop to achieve their full potential.

Figure 12



## Case Study C

*"This is exhausting – Are we really getting anywhere?"*

### Team

- Initially no track record of groups from north and south of the county working together.
- Within six months shared vision in place, bringing clarity of purpose and bond within the team, although no radical reforms coming forward.
- Within 12 months, working protocols in place have achieved sense of security, therefore highly creative solutions to long-standing problems are coming forward.
- Shared ownership of the direction due to successful adaptation of lead's role – leading and driving to begin with, then assuming organiser role, finally stepping back to allow participants to lead.

### User engagement

- Initially a communications exercise mentioning programme in newsletters.
- Within six months consultation exercises undertaken, giving evidence of users' views.
- Within 12 months devising initiatives to allow users and potential users to shape future services, particularly groups that have not used their services before.

### Competencies

- Highly competent leader with understanding of lead role.
- Initially confident in their abilities and current progress.
- Within six months questioning the way they worked and their achievements as compared with user needs, highlighting necessary changes.
- Within 12 months learning has become second nature, including reaching black and minority ethnic (BME) and rural communities.

- Consortium has developed skills that probably already existed, but through their approach have been able to use them to improve services.

### Relationships with statutory sector:

- Initially poor with extremely low investment in VCS services.
- Elected members actively blocking relationships.
- After six months still a problem, the consortium had recognized the importance of engaging statutory sector and had formed links with key individuals.
- Within 12 months, VCS input considered crucial to bid for Local Area Agreement status.

### What did the model show?

A on the model shows the consortium position at the start of the programme, B is its position after 6 months, C after 12 months.

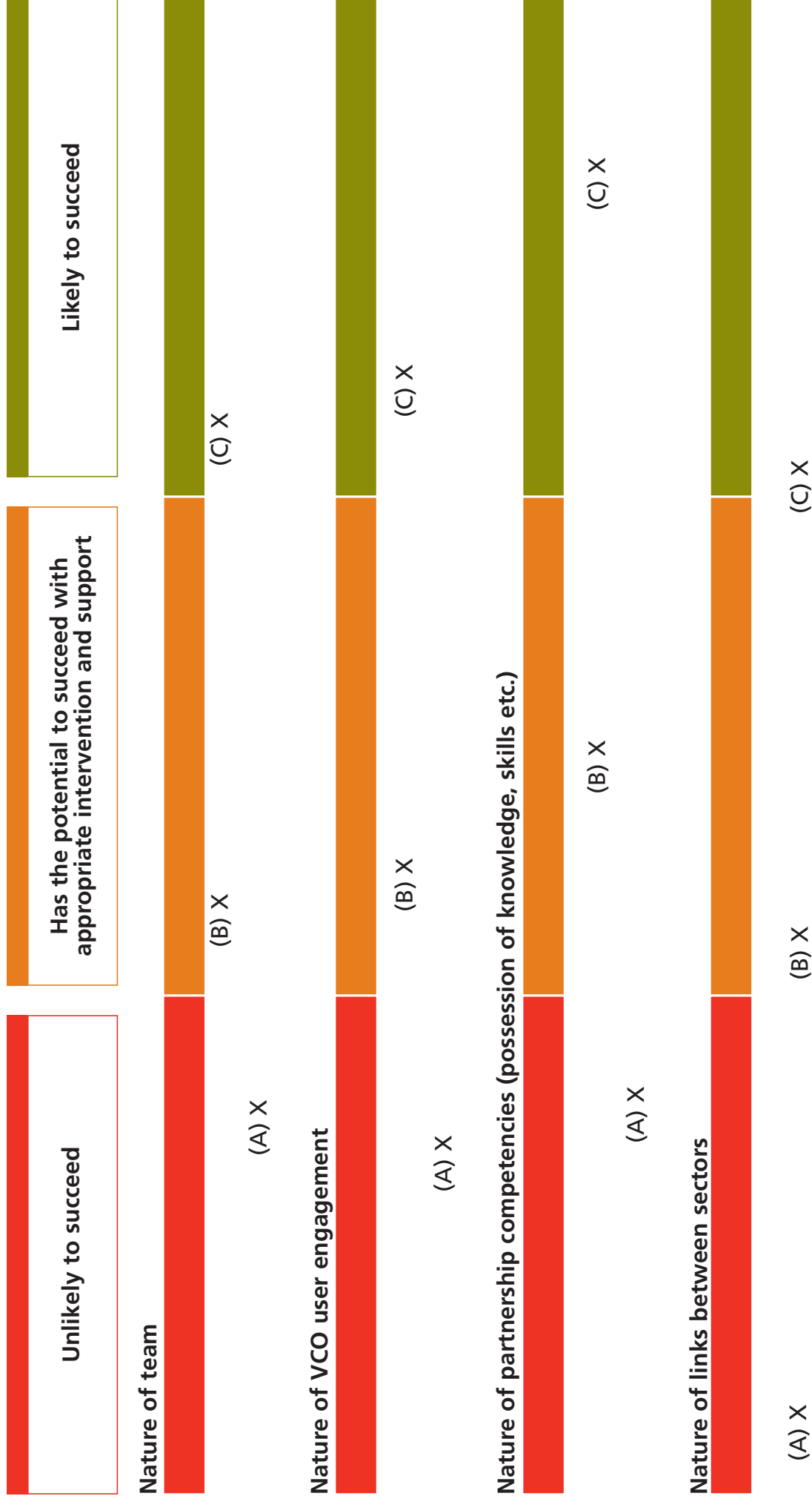
The consortium is working extremely well, with all lines progressing at a similar pace, resulting in lines of consequence. All key elements have moved from red to green. Team approach, evident competency and user engagement is creating confidence within statutory partners and likely to further improve measurement for inter-sector relationships.

### Solutions

Recognising there is still a way to go, the consortium can draw confidence and encouragement by measuring the distance travelled. They can also focus their minds on what they need to do next.

Case Study C diagram showing progress over 12 months. A is at the start of the programme, B is after 6 months and C is after 12 months

Figure 13



## Case study D

*"I've got all these consortia to support and I really don't know which one I should be paying attention to – this one keeps phoning me – but what support do they really need and how much time should I spend on them?"*

### Team

- High quality infrastructure investment plan submitted.
- Strong vision evident.
- Close-knit group producing highly innovative suggestions.

### User engagement

- Seemingly wide face to face consultation.
- User feedback included in their plans and justified release of expenditure.

### Competencies

- Evident transition from research to action.
- User feedback boosted consortium's confidence to run with evident competencies.
- High competency in dealing with rural issues.

### Relationships with statutory sectors

- Extremely strong with consortium membership half VCS, half statutory sector.
- Evidence of high levels of VCS engagement throughout statutory sector's agenda.

### What did the model show?

The initial analysis is shown on the model as black crosses. On the surface the consortium was performing well and able to progress without intensive support. Seeing progress on the model promoted confidence within the consortium to innovate with less day to day contact.

In this instance the model was also used to compare engagement of different user groups in the programme, as part of a "proofing" exercise. ( see the red X on the model). This uncovered the noticeable deficit in the engagement of BME groups. From discussion it was clear that this was due to lack of understanding of their needs within the consortium.

### Solutions

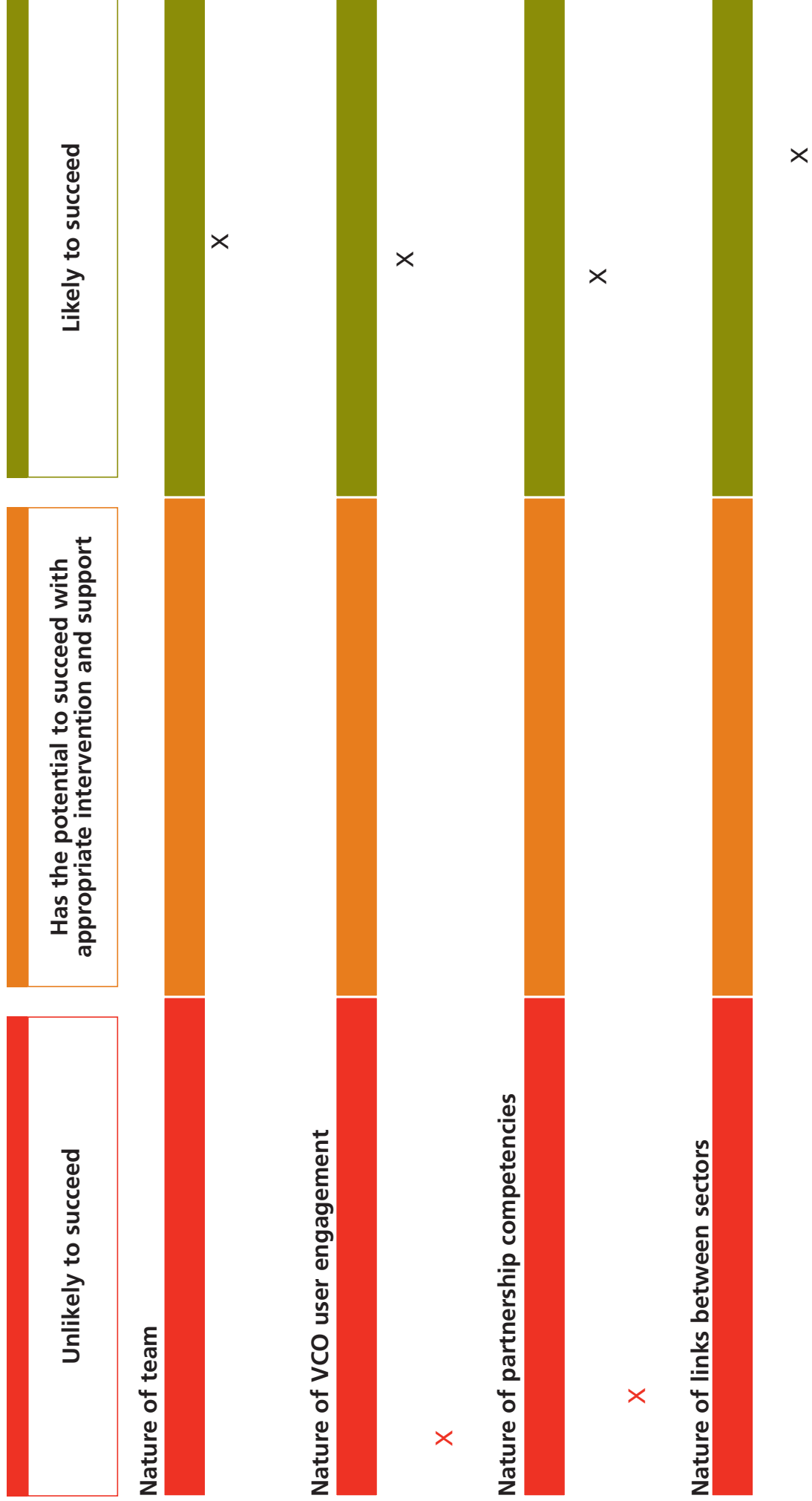
Although the overall picture seemed extremely positive, using the model differently highlighted the need for further work in developing the consortium's understanding and skills in working with members of BME communities. Rather than providing this directly it was more useful to engage the regional specialist BME support network to work with the consortium to increase knowledge and skills in this specific area.





Case study D diagram showing assessment of threats to delivery - BME considerations shown in red (specific measurement for engagement of service provision for BME communities)

Figure 14



## 6. Techniques to help progress through the model

The toolkit shows you how to measure progress in the four key areas and how these are linked. The ideal partnership will make steady progress in all four elements, until their entries on the model show lines of consequence in the green zone. In the real world this may not prove to be so, but the important outcome in this case is that progress has been made from the point the partnership started.

Some of this progress will happen naturally. However, there will be times when a partnership needs a 'critical friend' to provide support and maybe intervention to progress to the next level.

Getting that intervention right is critical to the partnership's development. Intervene at the wrong time or with the wrong help, and not only does this risk a regression with the partnership, but the critical friend's credibility may be lost or damaged.

This chapter explores some of the warning signs to look out for, and suggests some intervention and facilitation techniques that could help in a variety of circumstances. Some are most relevant to individual elements, such as the development of the team and some are generic skills proven to help in partnership development facilitation.

**This chapter does not represent a complete list of possible interventions** but should act as a catalyst to work out interventions appropriate to each area.

### 6.1 Role of facilitator

A good facilitator will be essential in enabling partnerships to move forward and deliver their aims. They are of use at all stages of the models to help point the consortium in the right direction and help them answer the appropriate questions. At any given point, the facilitator could be any number of figures inside or outside the

partnership. It doesn't always have to be the same person. The facilitator could change as the consortium's needs change.

The principles of facilitation will remain the same, whoever is performing the role. One of the main tools a facilitator has is questions. Remember, a facilitator is not there to provide answers. That is the role of the group.

Annex A of this document contains lots of questions which could be introduced at any stage and may prove particularly helpful when there is little or no clarity on the immediate outcome. The questions provide a prompt, but can be tailored to suit different situations.



## 6.2 Interventions to aid consortium development

When?	What?	How?
FORMING	Recognising barriers	<p><b>Common barriers to partnership working include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “We don’t have anything in common” – contrasting ethos, philosophies or working styles.</li> <li>• “We don’t have anything to do with them” – lack of communication between partners, whether by design or accident.</li> <li>• Unclear, hidden or incompatible agendas.</li> <li>• Partners joining the group later than others and upsetting the dynamics.</li> <li>• “I can’t tell them – they’ll nick my idea and beat me to the money” – unhealthy competition.</li> <li>• ‘David and Goliath’ – imbalance in the partnership’s power and control.</li> <li>• The bully – one partner manipulates or dominates others.</li> </ul>
	Overcoming barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitating an information exchange where people simply get to learn about each other.</li> <li>• Find things in common – each discuss what they do, why they do it, how they do it, who does it for them and the challenges they face. Could the group solve any of these together?</li> <li>• Set the agenda together – brainstorm ideas about what could be achieved through the partnership.</li> <li>• Find a shared vision – brainstorm questions like “if this partnership works, in 5 years time we could be / have / do....”</li> <li>• “Speed coping” exercise. Individuals have a minute each in pairs. One provides a problem, the other a solution. (Swap partners &amp; repeat)</li> <li>• Alternate who works with whom – ensure no-one always works with the bully.</li> <li>• Reduce opportunities for loud people to dominate, e.g. by asking them to scribe.</li> <li>• Sit the person most likely to dominate the meeting next to the chair, so they are less likely to “invite” them to speak by making eye contact.</li> <li>• Spot the person who hasn’t contributed and ask what they think. If they seem reluctant ask for the point of view of their role or organisation.</li> <li>• Skills audit – establish just what everyone in the group is really good at and highlight the unique things which each person could contribute.</li> <li>• Recording things in writing and having them to hand at every meeting helps. This helps focus the team and protects outcomes.</li> </ul>
	Clarifying goals <sup>7</sup>	<p><i>A goal is created three times. First as a mental picture. Second, when written down to add clarity and dimension. And third, when you take action towards its achievement. - Gary Ryan Blair</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 <b>Define the goal for the project</b> - Be as specific as you can. What needs to be covered in the project (read any material from the funder or GO carefully)? What options are allowed? What format is the best? How will it be delivered? What else does the team want to add?</li> <li>2 <b>List tasks to be completed</b> - List out all tasks in reasonable chunks. For instance, don’t just say “graphics,” but list how many graphs, photos, or logos may be needed for a project. Don’t forget to include “project management” tasks such as taking meeting notes.</li> </ol>

# FORMING

	<p><b>3 Assign responsibility for all tasks</b> - Tasks should be divided so that all members receive a significant portion of the tasks. You should also ensure that all team members are satisfied with the tasks the team has assigned to them.</p> <p><b>4 Develop a timeline and checklist</b> - Start from the deadline and work your way backwards. Make sure the timeline has some cushion built into it. Make sure the entire team understands and agrees to it.</p> <p><b>5 Post a timeline and checklist</b> - Once the timeline has been finalised, it should either be posted somewhere or sent or given to everyone electronically. Use team meetings to get timeline updates, then post or send updated versions. As items get checked off, the team will feel a sense of progress.</p> <p><b>6 Set up a central repository for all electronic files</b> - If you are working with electronic files, try to find a common area which the entire team can access. Some consortia have set up a website for this purpose.</p>																		
Managing team behaviour <sup>8</sup>	<p>Sometimes it is the behaviour of the team members that is causing the barriers. These behaviours may be acceptable and even beneficial in moderation, but in an extreme form, can be disruptive to the team.</p> <table> <tr> <th>Normal/Productive Behaviour</th><th>Extreme/Unproductive Behaviour</th></tr> <tr> <td>Raising a Concern</td><td><b>Nitpicking</b> - Questioning or objecting to every possible detail on the project</td></tr> <tr> <td>Asking Questions</td><td><b>Missing Details</b> - Constantly asking questions because you were not paying attention the first time</td></tr> <tr> <td>Ownership/Responsibility</td><td><b>Possessiveness</b> – Refusal to allow anyone to alter or critique the work you have done for the project</td></tr> <tr> <td>Principled</td><td><b>Uncompromising</b> – Never accepting any proposed compromises</td></tr> <tr> <td>Listening &amp; Reflecting</td><td><b>Lurking</b> – Never contributing in team meetings or other communications</td></tr> <tr> <td>Staying in Touch</td><td><b>Nudging</b> – Always sending reminders and not allowing members a reasonable interval to respond before sending out more notes</td></tr> <tr> <td>Follows Procedure</td><td><b>Inflexible</b> – Not allowing for changes in a plan or agenda</td></tr> <tr> <td>On top of things</td><td><b>Doing Everything</b> – Not allowing other members to make contributions</td></tr> </table>	Normal/Productive Behaviour	Extreme/Unproductive Behaviour	Raising a Concern	<b>Nitpicking</b> - Questioning or objecting to every possible detail on the project	Asking Questions	<b>Missing Details</b> - Constantly asking questions because you were not paying attention the first time	Ownership/Responsibility	<b>Possessiveness</b> – Refusal to allow anyone to alter or critique the work you have done for the project	Principled	<b>Uncompromising</b> – Never accepting any proposed compromises	Listening & Reflecting	<b>Lurking</b> – Never contributing in team meetings or other communications	Staying in Touch	<b>Nudging</b> – Always sending reminders and not allowing members a reasonable interval to respond before sending out more notes	Follows Procedure	<b>Inflexible</b> – Not allowing for changes in a plan or agenda	On top of things	<b>Doing Everything</b> – Not allowing other members to make contributions
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<sup>7</sup> <http://ttt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/organize.html>

<sup>8</sup> <http://ttt.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/responsibility.html>

FORMING	Dealing with difficult behaviour	<p>Generally, it is best to make a significant effort to resolve problems within the team before contacting an external mediator. If one or more people are showing unproductive behaviour, try these steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. First, the team should decide if the behaviour in question is really unproductive or just a part of the team process. Does the behaviour?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Interfere with the team's ability to complete project work?</li> <li>b. Interfere with the team's ability to reach true consensus?</li> <li>c. Significantly interfere with team morale? Morale may not be perfect all the time, but people should be able to work together.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Make sure a specific behaviour has been identified as unproductive by the team and not just an individual. The problem is with the behaviour not with the person.</li> <li>3. When discussing the behaviour with a person, try to frame the issue as: "I/We feel (frustrated/concerned) when you (fill in behaviour) because it (explain how it affects the team)."</li> <li>4. When appropriate, acknowledge that the person may be acting with the best of intentions.</li> <li>5. Allow the person to express his or her side of the issue, but make sure he or she understands why the team is concerned.</li> <li>6. If necessary, attempt to reach a compromise so that both the individual and the person are satisfied.</li> </ol>
	Ensuring effective communications methods are in place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An up to date database with all relevant contact details including emails.</li> <li>• Email lists circulated.</li> <li>• Websites with member boards/chat rooms.</li> <li>• Regular newsletter/e bulletin to all members and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Regular meetings.</li> </ul>

When?	What?	How?
STORMING	Take steps to deal with conflict. <sup>9</sup>	<p><b>Most members of a team have to learn two fundamentals:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Having different opinions is one of the essential benefits of teamwork.</li> <li>2. Team members have strong feelings and emotions. A team cannot achieve its full potential if all that is allowed is logic or information.</li> </ol> <p>Fortunately, it is possible to take steps to minimise disagreement and conflict and to resolve those disagreements that may be dangerously escalating. Steps to consider as a team are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acknowledge that the conflict exists.</li> <li>2. Gain common ground.</li> <li>3. Seek to understand all angles.</li> <li>4. Attack the issue not each other.</li> <li>5. Develop an action plan.</li> </ol>
	Identify the type of conflict	<p><b>Internal conflict</b> - An individual or team member is experiencing a personal conflict that may or may not be related to the team, but which is interfering with the person's ability to perform.</p> <p><b>Individual conflict with one other team member</b> - One team member is in conflict with another.</p> <p><b>Individual conflict with the entire team</b> - One team member is experiencing conflict with the entire team.</p> <p><b>Conflict between several team members</b> - The entire team is experiencing conflict with several other team members.</p> <p><b>Conflict between teams</b> - The entire team is in conflict with another team.</p>
	Depersonalise conflict	<p>During the problem-solving phase focus on issues not personalities. Use these guidelines to help depersonalise conflicts.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Encourage each side to objectively explain his or her bottom line requirements. When the team is determining a solution, each person's criteria should be evaluated.</li> <li>2. Remind the team of ground rules while generating options such as "no criticising statements by other people until all ideas are posted."</li> <li>3. Encourage everyone to listen to other points of view.</li> <li>4. During the process keep encouraging points of agreement.</li> <li>5. Don't stifle new anger, but also don't dwell on it.</li> </ol>

<sup>9</sup> <http://tit.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/conflicts.html#happens>



STORMING		
Structuring discussion	<p>A structured way to handle conflicts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let each person state his or her view briefly.</li> <li>• Have neutral team members reflect on areas of agreement or disagreement.</li> <li>• Explore areas of disagreement for specific issues.</li> <li>• Have opponents suggest modifications to their own points of view as well as others.</li> <li>• If consensus is blocked, ask opponents if they can accept the team's decision.</li> </ul>	
Appreciative Enquiry <sup>10</sup>	<p><b>Process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discover what gives life and energy to the group.</li> <li>• Seek the root causes of success.</li> <li>• Determine the conditions that made excellence possible.</li> <li>• Search for solutions that already exist.</li> </ul> <p><b>Assumptions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In every organisation something works.</li> <li>• What we focus on becomes real.</li> <li>• People are more confident to go forward in to the future when they carry forward parts of the past.</li> <li>• Carry forward the best.</li> <li>• Do more of what works.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What works well and what gives energy and life to your organisation?</li> <li>• What has our consortium contributed to our beneficiary group / target area?</li> <li>• What are the successes?</li> <li>• Dream – what would it be like if this were the norm?</li> <li>• What were our wishes for our consortium: collectively and individually?</li> </ul>	
Ensure communication methods are still working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate communication methods. Ensure everyone is getting all the correct messages.</li> <li>• Check for any changes in contact details.</li> <li>• How could communication be changed for the better?</li> </ul>	

<sup>10</sup> Cluster Pilot Project – Cluster Facilitators Handbook, Engage East Midlands April 2003. Taken from Appreciative Inquiry – a constructive approach to organisation development and social change, D. Cooperrider and D. Whitney, Taos New Mexico: Corporation for Positive Change

When?	What?	How?
NORMING	Strategic planning – ask the right questions	<p><b>Ask the group</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are our strengths?</li> <li>• Who are our users?</li> <li>• Who are our partners?</li> <li>• Will either of these change in the future?</li> <li>• Will our services change as time goes on?</li> <li>• Does the culture of the partnership and its component organisations support our key result areas?</li> <li>• Where does the partnership want to end up?</li> <li>• Are we leading the direction of the partnership? If not, why not and what can we do about it?</li> <li>• What are our key successes to date? Are we using the learning from these successes to build more? If so, how? If not, why not?</li> <li>• What, if anything must we change in order to have everyone in the partnership focus on them?</li> </ul>
	Come to consensus <sup>11</sup>	<p>Stating expectations clearly will give the team a common ground to begin any discussion. Some ways to clarifying expectations include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing a clear <b>statement of team mission</b> or purpose.</li> <li>2. <b>Ground rules</b> governing participation, sharing of responsibilities.</li> <li>3. Agreement to <b>depersonalise conflicts</b>.</li> <li>4. Team recognition that team process, including discussion and brainstorming, is important to results and needs regular attention.</li> <li>5. Use of <b>structured processes for problem solving</b> and conflict resolution.</li> <li>6. Awareness of stages of project development and maintenance priorities of each stage.</li> <li>7. Clearly and appropriately <b>defined individual responsibilities</b> for real work for each other; clear linkage between individual responsibilities and the team mission.</li> <li>8. Clearly defined <b>project standards and time lines</b>.</li> </ol>
	Agree working and decision making protocols <sup>12</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Write down the vision in a way that everyone can buy in to.</li> <li>• Write down codes of conduct that everyone can sign up to.</li> <li>• Write down the specific remit of a subgroup.</li> <li>• Write down who in the group can make decisions about what, how the decision will be made, who needs to be present, and what will happen if the group can't reach consensus.</li> <li>• Keep the focus on the needs you came together to address, and the actions that will meet those needs. Don't fall in to the trap of always focusing on the organisations around the table.</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup><http://tit.its.psu.edu/suggestions/teams/student/conflicts.html#happens>

<sup>12</sup> ibid

NORMING	Form sub groups to take work forward	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure that those involved in effecting change understand why it is necessary and can see how it can be achieved.</li> <li>2. Capture the views of service users and conduct thorough needs analysis.</li> <li>3. Recognise that change is a learning process, not an event.</li> <li>4. Change does not just happen, it must be led.</li> <li>5. Successful solutions for change can be found both within and outside the group.</li> <li>6. Ensure implementation is collaborative not solitary.</li> <li>7. Build in thorough, robust evaluation.</li> </ol>
	Pilot projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Carry out pilot projects to test drive findings from research before launching full scale project.</li> <li>● Evaluate procedures and systems to check for efficiency.</li> <li>● Learn from process.</li> </ul>
PERFORMING	Continue to communicate	<p>Make sure you feed back to everyone who has taken part and given views so far. One of the major reasons people give for not participating in consultations and planning initiatives is that they don't think their views are really heard. Often it is not that these people were ignored, just that no-one remembered to tell them what difference their views made.</p>
	Evaluate work and relationships	<p><b>This is a great time to "proof"</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Is everything you are doing accessible to everyone?</li> <li>● Take a step back and look at who is really engaged – what sort of organisations are they? Where do they come from? Who are their users?</li> <li>● Is there a good mix of people, in particular people from "harder to reach" groups like small rural communities and communities of faith and ethnicity?</li> <li>● If the answer is "no", try to find out why.</li> <li>● How could the things you are planning next be done differently to increase participation of people from these groups?</li> <li>● Discuss your thoughts with members of the communities you need to engage and specialists in the areas you need to address. What do they think of your plans?</li> </ul>
	Avoid complacency	<p>Don't drift back into "storming".</p>

## 6.3 Interventions to aid VCS user engagement

When?	What?	How?
INFORM	Let people know what is happening	<p><b>Produce:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets</li> <li>• Websites</li> <li>• Newsletters</li> </ul> <p><b>Hold:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "Open houses"</li> <li>• Drop in session</li> </ul> <p><b>Visit:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key individuals</li> <li>• Other people's events to speak about the programme / activity and how they can get involved.</li> </ul>
	Prepare communication / engagement plan <sup>13</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be clear about what you want to achieve and any limits there might be (such as time and money) before starting.</li> <li>• Aims and limits should be clear and understood by everyone involved.</li> <li>• Make sure there is enough time and money to support participation.</li> <li>• Be flexible about different ways of working.</li> <li>• Think about different ways to involve people who might not usually feel involved in services.</li> <li>• Look for local and regional user activities and get them involved.</li> </ul>
	Ensure staff / agency buy in	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publicise the User Participation Strategy to make sure that all staff are aware of what it says and understand their part in making it happen.</li> <li>• Develop training for all staff on how, when, and where to involve service users in their own services and in the planning and development of services for the community.</li> <li>• Before the participation begins make sure that the organisation is prepared to respond to things that service users might suggest.</li> <li>• Participation should be about local service users, not about what managers or other people want.</li> <li>• Make sure all staff understand the value of having service user involvement and have the support to make it successful.</li> </ul>
CONSULT	Set up customer care guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Treat people with respect and dignity.</li> <li>• Work and make decisions with people.</li> <li>• Be fair and just with people.</li> <li>• Make sure that people are encouraged and supported to speak their minds and have their say about our services.</li> <li>• Make sure that we are always user-friendly and that all our participation activities are accessible to service users.</li> <li>• Be clear with people on what they are being asked to be involved with, how their views will be used, and when they will be informed of the results.</li> </ul>
	Focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups seek to gather attitudes, opinions and perceptions from interested parties to inform projects and provide ideas for future progress.</li> <li>• Bring together appropriate groups of 8-10 customers.</li> <li>• Find out what they think about current projects and their strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• Find out how well they feel they are being served.</li> <li>• Find out how they feel about future plans.</li> </ul>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.scie.org.uk/publications/positionpapers/pp03.asp>

CONSULT	Surveys	<p>Conduct a user needs analysis. Use surveys to quantify findings from focus groups and measure strength of feeling about aspects of service delivery or future work. Surveys are also a useful tool to involve customers and make them a part of the project. Ask the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the priorities for our users?</li> <li>• Have we had any complaints from users in the last three months?</li> <li>• What can we improve about our services?</li> <li>• What external factors will have the most influence on our services?</li> <li>• What changes do we need to make to the way we deliver our services?</li> <li>• How will it impact on the existing systems within our own organisations?</li> <li>• What's going wrong that we can fix right now?</li> <li>• How much will it cost?</li> </ul>
	Feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask participants how they would like to be given feedback.</li> <li>• Develop suitable ways to feedback to service users on how well we are doing in making the strategy happen and how long this will take us.</li> <li>• Make sure that the results of participation and consultation are used to improve the services we provide and how we provide them.</li> <li>• Create opportunities and support for service users to comment on the quality and usefulness of the services provided to them.</li> <li>• Make sure that information is shared by all.</li> </ul>
	Public comment/ hearings	<p>Present strategies and findings to the public for final comment before embarking on them. Hold consultations.</p>
INVOLVE	Set up schemes to encourage user participation <sup>14</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve service users in checking how well we currently practice user participation.</li> <li>• Talk to service users about how to make sure that everyone that should be represented in the participation is included.</li> <li>• Develop plans to fill unmet needs and gaps.</li> <li>• Support service users to have the opportunity to be involved in staff recruitment and training, including the development of job descriptions/person specifications, interview questions, and taking part on selection panels and training programmes. Support service users to be involved in the running of services, including taking part in making decisions about how services are organised and delivered, and how they measure up.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for service users to be involved in the design of services, including the development of service plans and specifications, and in tender evaluations.</li> <li>• Create opportunities for service users to be involved in checking our public information to make sure it is easy to read and useful - set up an Information User Panel.</li> </ul>
	Target specific users	<p>Set up schemes to specifically target socially excluded groups. A proofing exercise can be used to flag up the people you need to specifically target..</p>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.kingston.gov.uk/userparticipationstrategy.doc>

COLLABORATE	<b>Citizen advisory committees</b>	<p>Recruit users onto sub groups to advise on projects. Ensure socially excluded groups are active members of the consortium or form scrutiny groups.</p>
	<b>User training</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop training and support for service users to build confidence and to make sure participation is meaningful at all levels.</li> <li>• Help service users to have their say through advocacy support.</li> <li>• Develop training for service users on how the service provider is organised and the way it works.</li> <li>• Develop training on Quality Standards, Best Value, and other important areas.</li> <li>• Be aware of the relationships between the practitioners and the service users and the power involved.</li> <li>• Look at ways to deal with any problems in the relationship between practitioners and service users.</li> <li>• People who use services have a very valuable contribution to make. Make sure they are comfortable with the way you are using the information they tell you.</li> </ul>
EMPOWER	<b>Citizen juries, Delegated decisions</b>	<p>Involvement of users in more productive way. Give the people who use services the power to make decisions about them. Use proofing to ensure that the ways people are being engaged are accessible to the widest possible group of people.</p>
	<b>Set standards and targets in user participation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop measurable and achievable targets for user participation in the delivery and development of services.</li> <li>• Have a system to see how successful the participation has been and what changes it has made to services.</li> <li>• Move to a systematic approach to user participation so that we always expand and extend the things we do well, and improve on those areas that need to be developed.</li> </ul>



## 6.4 Interventions to improve partnership competencies including rural issues

When?	What?	How?
<b>UNCONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE</b>	<b>Buddying or peer support<sup>15</sup></b>	<p>The first challenge is to get the consortium members to recognise that they are not 'competent' and that they do have skills and knowledge to learn. One way to do this is to pair them with an organisation that is more developed than they are. Buddying schemes pair up experienced managers in a mutual support relationship. Unlike mentoring there is no 'senior' partner in the relationship.</p> <p><b>What is involved?</b></p> <p>Pairing organisations that are going through similar change or development processes, sometimes with one being more advanced than the other. Pairs meet initially to establish the ground-rules of the arrangement and after that it is recommended that they meet every 8 weeks.</p> <p><b>What's in it for the Buddies?</b></p> <p>Both parties will gain an independent perspective on their work. A buddy will be someone you can draw on for advice, use as a sounding board and generally share your experiences (good and bad) with.</p> <p><b>Potential Pitfalls of Buddying<sup>16</sup></b></p> <p>Factors leading to difficulties in such relationships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The mentor not devoting the agreed time and/or prioritising the Buddying Scheme;</li> <li>• Geographical and travelling distance between the two partners;</li> <li>• The perception that buddies do not understand the scope and parameters of the buddying scheme.</li> </ul> <p>In most cases, tensions in buddying relationships can be ironed out in a mature and confident way, with the support of a third party, if required.</p> <p><b>Successful Buddying</b></p> <p>Key factors that leading to the creation and development of successful buddying relationships include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A genuine two-way exploration of the context of the buddy within their organisation and the avoidance by the mentor of super-imposing their perceptions and assumptions.</li> <li>• Similarities either to do with organisational culture, client base or life beliefs and values between the two partners.</li> <li>• Confidence in the mentor's ability, substantiated by the credibility of the mentor's reputation within the voluntary sector/the local community.</li> <li>• The establishment and agreement of ground rules and terms of reference of the relationship from the outset.</li> <li>• The use of the initial meeting to develop mutual trust, respect and confidence by understanding the individual, the context of their organisation, their key concerns and their aspirations of the buddying relationship.</li> <li>• The opportunity for buddies and mentors to visit each other's organisations and meet other colleagues and in some cases, their management committees.</li> <li>• Both parties embracing the concept behind the Buddying Scheme and working jointly within its parameters.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Action learning</b><sup>17</sup></p>	<p>Action Learning is peer supported learning in small groups. The process involves encouraging reflection and learning new skills that managers and others can apply in any work/life situation. It can be used throughout the development of consortia. A freelance facilitator is recruited to lead each set. The facilitators set up and manage the first meeting and thereafter leave management to the set itself. At the meetings each member is given 10 minutes to outline their problem, they are questioned by the set to find out more details, and then finish off by committing to certain action points.</p> <p>Action Learning can't be seen as a cure all for all management needs. It is very good, for example, for learning how to build a team, motivate staff, and solve problems, but not as good for specific skills such as budgeting or law.</p> <p>It is also a long term learning process. Therefore it could be seen as a method to support the partnership through the whole programme, rather than through a specific issue.</p> <p>The key benefits of action learning are likely to be that it will help bring members of the partnership together with a shared ownership of problems, thus contributing directly to their position on the assessment model, and that it is less time consuming and pressured than other learning methods.</p>
<p><b>Benchmarking</b></p>	<p>Benchmarking improves performance by identifying and applying best demonstrated practices to operations. Managers compare the performance of consortium processes externally with those of other consortia or other groupings in similar positions. The objective of Benchmarking is to find examples of superior performance and to understand the processes and practices driving that performance. Companies then improve their performance by tailoring and incorporating these best practices into their own operations—not by imitating, but by innovating.</p> <p><b>Methodology</b></p> <p>Benchmarking involves the following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Select a product, service or process to benchmark.</li> <li>● Identify the key performance measures.</li> <li>● Choose companies or internal areas to benchmark against.</li> <li>● Collect data on performance and practices.</li> <li>● Analyse the data and identify opportunities for improvement of your service.</li> <li>● Adapt and implement the best practices, setting reasonable goals and ensuring consortium wide acceptance.</li> </ul> <p><b>Common Uses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Improve performance.</b> Benchmarking identifies methods of improving operational efficiency and product design.</li> <li>● <b>Increase the rate of organisational learning.</b> Benchmarking brings new ideas and knowledge into the company group and facilitates experience sharing.</li> </ul>

<b>CONSCIOUS INCOMPETENCE</b>	<b>Training needs analysis</b>	Once the consortium members are aware that there is new knowledge and skills that they need to develop it is important to conduct a training needs analysis to identify exactly what it is that they need training in.
	<b>Action learning</b>	See previous page.
	<b>Training courses</b>	Specific training courses need providing at reasonable cost, in appropriate venues and at times to suit delegates. In some instances it may be essential to provide cover or funding for cover to allow the person to go on training courses. Courses that could be provided include management skills such as marketing, budgeting, ICT and awareness of legal issues. Also training courses around particular issues such as rurality and covering topics like rural proofing and equality proofing.
	<b>Signposting</b>	It is no good providing courses unless potential delegates know about them and how to access them. A signposting service is essential to allow this to happen.
	<b>Benchmarking</b>	See previous.
<b>CONSCIOUS COMPETENCE</b>	<b>Action learning</b>	Action learning support is suitable for every stage of the consortium development providing appropriate learning to the person's particular level.
	<b>Advanced training courses</b>	For some skills gaps more advanced, longer term training courses may be needed. Consortia may need help accessing these or work could be undertaken with universities to set up specific modules.
	<b>Resource packs</b>	At this stage in skills development consortia may need nothing more than resource packs to guide them through certain tasks.
<b>UNCONSCIOUS COMPETENCE</b>	<b>Become a 'buddy' or mentor</b>	See previous page. Once you become unconsciously competent, it is very easy to slip back into being unconsciously incompetent as you are no longer aware of new knowledge. Becoming a mentor aids this as by helping someone else, it actively helps the mentor to recognise knowledge that he/she is lacking.
	<b>Action learning</b>	See previous page.

## 6.5 Interventions to improve links between statutory and VCS sectors

When?	What?	How?
<b>INFORMING</b>	<b>Let stakeholders know what is happening</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fact sheets.</li> <li>• Articles in relevant journals.</li> <li>• Websites.</li> <li>• Open houses.</li> <li>• Go to conferences stakeholders attend.</li> <li>• Organise programme-related events.</li> </ul>
<b>CONSULTING</b>	<b>From the consortia point of view</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask for advice from potential funders.</li> <li>• Organise stakeholder conferences to explain projects and outline mutual benefits.</li> <li>• Invite funders to public consultation when setting up project..</li> <li>• Invite them to visit your consortium/attend meetings.</li> <li>• Ask, "Is there any project you'd like to see funded that you've never had a grant proposal for?"</li> <li>• Ask, "What were the most successful programmes you've ever funded?"</li> <li>• Ask, "What are the main reasons why you reject most proposals?"</li> <li>• Ask, "How could we improve our grant-seeking process?"</li> <li>• Ask if you could interview them for expert input on a proposal/project you are considering.</li> </ul>
	<b>From the point of view of the statutory sector</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve potential fundees when designing funding programmes.</li> <li>• Hold launch events to promote any new funding opportunities.</li> <li>• Attend consortium meetings when invited.</li> <li>• Offer advice on how the project could achieve funders' aims and listen to what the consortium want to achieve. Look for synergy.</li> <li>• Signpost consortium to other appropriate funders.</li> </ul>
<b>CO-OPERATION</b>	<b>Start building relationships</b>	<p>In any statutory / voluntary sector partnership there is the potential for the voluntary or community organisation to feel like the 'poor relation'. Historically the relationship has been one of funder and applicant. For partnerships to progress, we need to move away from this culture towards a partnership of equals.</p> <p>It is important to build on this relationship to demonstrate the synergy between sectors. As the Voluntary Community Organisation achieves the outcomes of the funding relationship, so it must demonstrate to its statutory partner that it has become an essential part of achieving its aims.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold regular meetings between funder and consortium.</li> <li>• Set up stakeholder workshops to discuss joint benefits.</li> <li>• Consortium should ask funder to act as project advisor.</li> <li>• Funders to consider appropriate support e.g. full cost recovery, outcome monitoring etc.</li> </ul>

<b>COMMUNICATION</b>	<b>Two way communication between statutory partners and consortium</b>	<p>Senior statutory sector agency officers should be involved strategically with VCS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When writing press articles, invite each party to contribute a quote as validation. Send both parties copies of any written output or conference presentations you make, or publicity you get.</li> <li>• Ask for / offer clarification of any new strategies.</li> <li>• Statutory partners could offer to act as a reviewer of their consortium proposals.</li> <li>• Continue regular meetings, conferences and workshops.</li> <li>• Attend all programme related events.</li> </ul>
<b>ADVISORY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Members sit on advisory boards for each other's projects</b>	Statutory agencies able to discuss common areas of concern with VCS before making plans. VCS participation is integral to developing policies. VCS invite the input of statutory partners ahead of making plans for future action. Both sectors can evidence real participation from the other, through active engagement in sub-groups, committees, working parties etc.
<b>MANAGEMENT BOARD</b>	<b>Members sit on each other's boards</b>	Both sectors feel comfortable enough with each other to have honest discussions about who does what best. Relationships are based on mutual respect and proper understanding of the aspirations, potential and limitations of the other sector. Each sector has the opportunity to benefit from the others' expertise.
<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>All decisions taken benefit both parties</b>	Automatic joint decision making with, and service delivery through, VCS on the part of the statutory sector. VCS activity is planned with statutory sector partners and aligned with community plans and the aspirations of the statutory sector for the communities they serve. This is a win/win situation for local communities. Such partnerships might be evidenced through shared delivery of a local area agreement for example.

## Annex A: A tool box of questions for facilitators

### Overall:

- What could we achieve in our current circumstances?
- What can we do to change to fit this environment?
- How can we make our working methods more productive?
- What potential do our skill mix and available resources give us?
- What improvements are possible with our partnership?
- Could these working methods be transferable to elsewhere?
- What are the risks with this approach?
- This is a new and complex issue for us. How can we overcome it?
- Who else can we bring in on this and how?
- How can we turn this negative situation to our advantage?
- What will the impact of our programme be for our users and partners?
- What is helping and what is hindering our ability to provide the best possible services for our users? How can we reduce or eliminate hindrances and build on the helpers?
- What is currently helping us become a high performing organisation?
- What is preventing us from becoming a high performing organisation?
- How can we maximise our chances of becoming a high performing organisation?

### Organisational review

- What are we here to do?
- What are our core services?
- Who are our main service users?
- What major activities are involved in providing each service?
- Who provides us with the resources to provide our services?
- What two things do they do well? How does that help us do our job?
- What's one thing we would change if we could? How would the change help us do our job better?
- What things do we do that aren't directly related to our core purposes? Why do we do them? Should we continue doing them? What do we need to do to stop doing them?
- How do we evaluate success? Does it reflect the needs of our users? What could we evaluate that might be more meaningful?
- What changes could we make to really enhance the experience of using our services? What would make our users really excited?





# A tool box of questions for facilitators - continued

## Improving service delivery

- What are the priorities for our users?
- Have we had any complaints from users in the last three months?
- Has anyone talked to our users about our services recently?
- What can we improve about our services?
- What external factors will have the most influence on our services?
- What changes do we need to make to the way we deliver our services?
- How will it impact on the existing systems within our own organisations?
- What's going wrong that we can fix right now?
- How much will it cost?
- Do we have clear decision-making processes? If so, what are they?
- What contributions do our individual skills strengths bring to the table?
- How can we be more accessible to each other?
- What is getting in the way of solving this problem? Is one of us doing it?
- How can we express differences without apportioning blame?
- Which behaviours are unproductive? How can we help individuals take responsibility for their behaviour?

## Strategic Planning

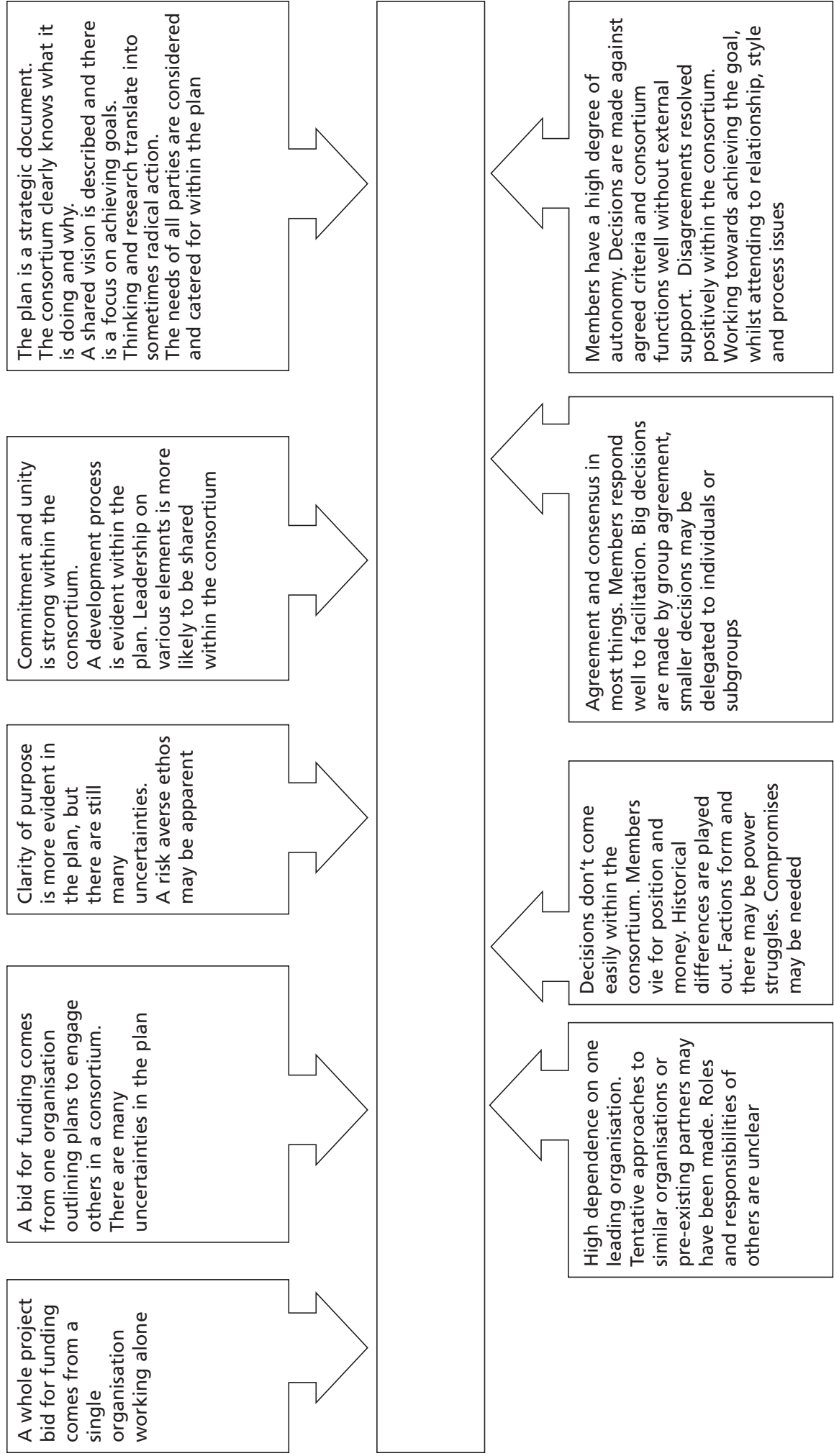
- What are our strengths?
- Who are our users?
- Who are our partners?
- Will either of these change in the future?
- Will our services change as time goes on?
- Does the culture of the partnership and its component organisations support our key result areas?
- Where does the partnership want to end up?
- Are we leading the direction of the partnership? If not, why not and what can we do about it?
- What are our key successes to date? Are we using the learning from these successes to build more? If so, how? If not, why not? What, if anything must we change in order to have everyone in the partnership focus on them?

## Resolving conflict:

- What are we trying to accomplish as a partnership?
- What are our individual roles and responsibilities in accomplishing that goal?
- What information do we need from whom, and who needs to source it?
- Who can we call on for help if things go wrong?

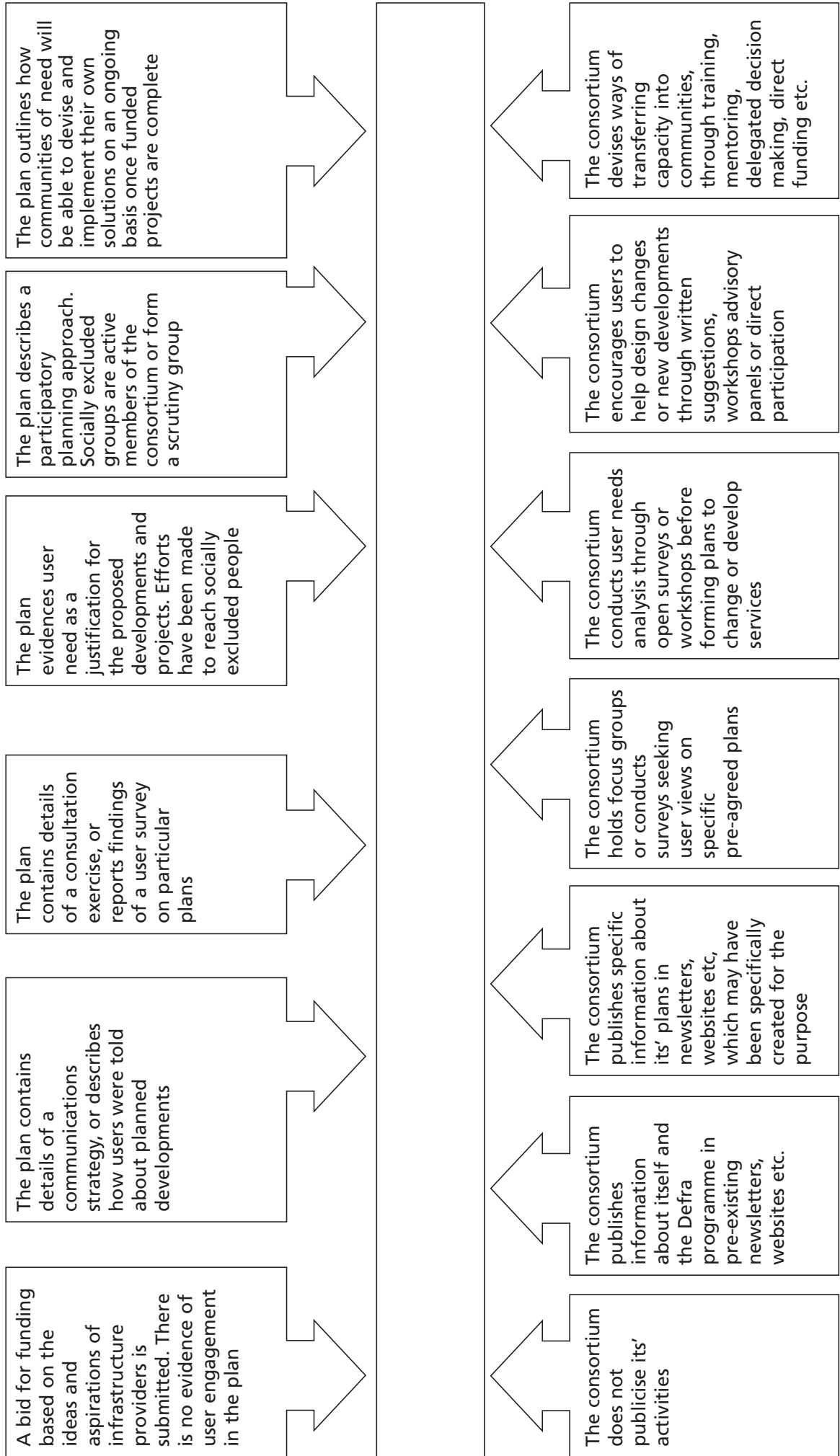


## Annex B: Symptoms of progression through consortium development



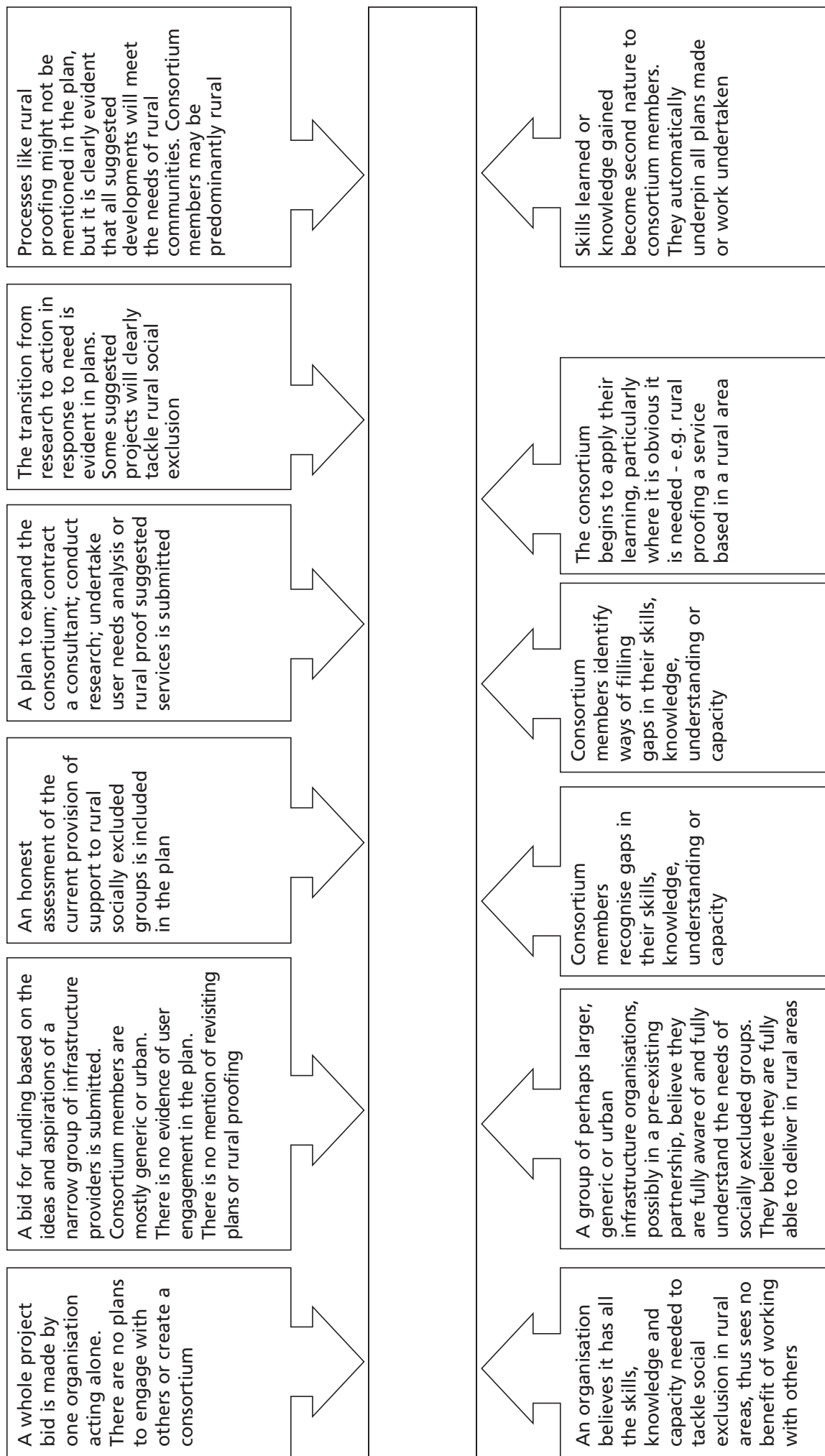
Blank tools to use for your assessments

## Symptoms of progression towards empowerment of user groups



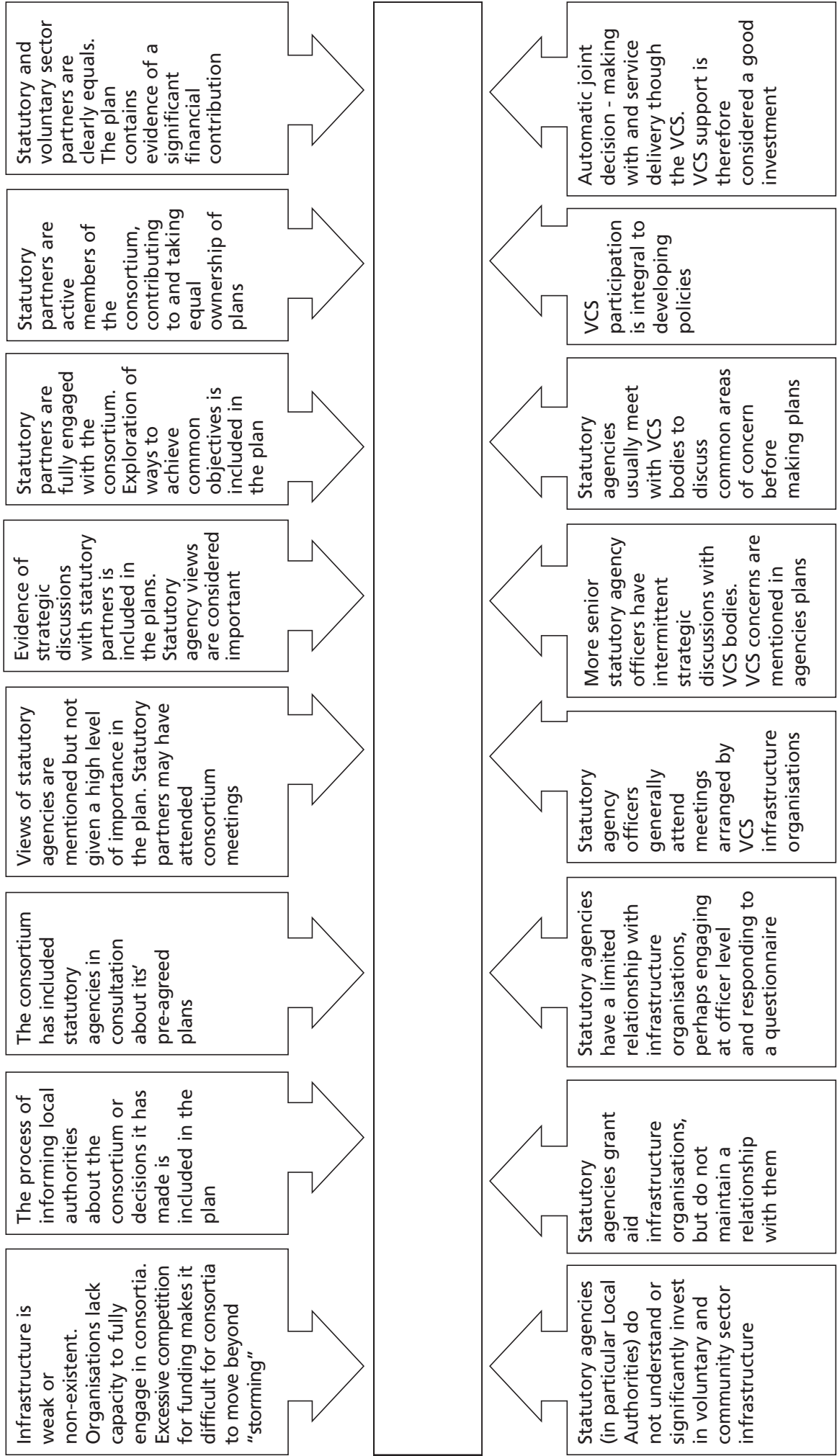
Blank tools to use for your assessments

## Symptoms of the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in delivering a programme through partnership



Blank tools to use for your assessments

## Symptoms of nature of relationship with statutory sector



**“Traffic light” indicators of likelihood that a partnership will be able to achieve its’ aims and objectives**

Unlikely to succeed	Has the potential to succeed with appropriate intervention and support	Likely to succeed
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Nature of team			
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No team	Forming	Storming	Norming	Performing
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Nature of VCO user engagement				
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No engagement	Inform	Consult	Involve	Collaborate	Empower
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**Nature of partnership competencies (possession of knowledge, skills etc.)**

Unconscious Incompetent	Conscious Incompetent	Conscious competent	Unconscious competent
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**Nature of links between sectors**

No relationship	Informing	Consultation	Co-operation	Communication	Advisory committees	Management board	Partners
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